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AN INQUIRY,

&c. &c.

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AN INQUIRY
INTO
THE MORAL CHARACTER
OF
LORD BYRON.

To Philosophy, enlightened by the Affections, does it alone belong properly to estimate the claims of the deceased on the one hand, and of the present age and future generations on the other, and to strike the balance between them.

WORDSWORTH.

BY J. W. SIMMONS.

LONDON:

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AN INQUIRY

INTO

THE MORAL CHARACTER

ERRATA.

- Page 7, line 24, *for* "which men," *read* "such men."
— 26, line 18, *for* "very mere," *read* "the mere."
— 98, line 20, *for* "and," *read* "an."

have been consecrated to its mournful memory, have been a species of mere *fanfaronades*, issuing from the lips of those who seem to think that the darkest sorrows of this life are the peculiar inheritance of inspired minds, and constitute the melancholy conditions upon which great talents are conferred. (a) They "can see no reason why men of genius should not be

just as comfortable in the world, and partake as fully and with as much zest of its good things, as their humble fellow mortals of plain and inoffensive understandings. In short, they apprehend, that a general survey of the history of men of literary eminence will show that, instead of being as wretched as here (St. Pierie on Rousseau) and elsewhere represented, they enjoy life quite as much as any other class of persons." (*b*) From "a general survey of the history of men of literary eminence," or rather, men of genius, (for literary eminence does not always imply genius, as our Critic probably can testify,) an inference the reverse of this, we apprehend, is to be drawn. From such a survey, we are unavoidably led to deduce the discouraging truth that—while it is made the foundation of Natural Law, that man should be left to pursue his own happiness in his own way—happiness is almost entirely dependent upon circumstances over which we can have no possible controul; and seems to be least attainable by those who have usually the greatest capacity for its enjoyment—men of acute intellectual sensibility. These remarks are suggested by the personal history of

the extraordinary individual, whose Moral Character we purpose briefly to consider. The somewhat anomalous character of Lord Byron, both as a writer and a man, presents a wide field of inquiry to the philosopher and the critic, and is calculated, perhaps, to exhaust, alike, the ingenuity of speculation, and the powers of metaphysical analysis. His frame, morally and intellectually, may be said repeatedly to have undergone the nicest operations of the anatomical pen; and yet the mystery of his being remains still to be developed. The analysis of mind, unlike that of matter, requires in every stage of its progress certain *data* and *criteria*, in order to direct and facilitate its operations, which, while they are but rarely afforded to the inquirer, are, at the same time, in a great degree, vague, hypothetical, and unsatisfactory. It is in such cases, that we are led to remark and to lament the limitation which seems set to the researches of the human mind. Unlike the natural, the intellectual world has but one horizon, and that, perhaps in wisdom, is the *sensible*. We are not among the advocatés of the doctrine of the perfectibility of mind; because we are not certain that we possess any

definite notions of that state, whether moral, intellectual, or physical, which we generalize under the term perfection, and which we would designate by that term. (c) But we do think that the perfectibility of Moral Science might be predicated upon more rational grounds, were we able to originate and practically to apply a species of moral equations, whereby we might be enabled to ascertain and classify the phenomena of the social, as well as those of the natural world ; and where the contiguity of any two personal actions, like that of any two natural events, might be resolved into the process of cause and effect. The great truths of Morality, as well as of Revelation, have been long since expounded and promulgated ; notwithstanding which, both Ethics and Religion continue to be, the one problematical, and the other subjected to the test, not of faith, but of reason. And, as there have been zealots in religion, so, there have been persecutors in morals ; and if the heretic has been subjected to the pyre and the stake, the man of doubtful morality has been consigned to a mode of punishment even more unenlightened and unchristian ; and this, frequently, for no other

reason, than because his morality has been peculiar. The chief object of this Inquiry into the moral character of Lord Byron, a man who has been for so many years the admiration and the wonder of the age, is to afford, if possible, a metaphysical solution of the moral problem, into which the strange discrepancy between his sentiments and his actions, between his theory and practice of morals, may be said to have resolved itself. The nearest, and the only approach to a philosophical analysis of this sort, with which we are acquainted, is to be met with in the Article devoted to De Musset's Life of Rousseau, in the twelfth number of the New Monthly Magazine. In commenting upon the singular contradiction which Rousseau's conduct afforded of his principles, the writer of that article remarks, that the latter had become depraved before he was old enough to regulate the former. This, from all that we have been able to gather of that extraordinary man, seems undoubtedly to have been the case. Rousseau's moral principles and feelings had become the one warped, and the other radically depraved, long previous to the unfolding of his fine and vigorous intel-

lect. Long before his beautiful mind had put forth his bloom, his enthusiastic morals had "grown to seed." In other and more philosophical words, his passive impressions had been confirmed before his active principles had unfolded themselves. It is to be remarked, that the very laws of our constitution, in which is founded our capacity for moral improvement, is founded, at the same time, our capacity for moral evil. Much, therefore, will depend upon Education, particular modes of life, and the nature of our more constant occupations. Herein obtains the difference between the man of the world, or the man of business, and the man of secluded habits of life. Although the latter be possessed of higher powers of mind, and of greater purity and nobleness of principle, yet, from habitual indulgence in the fatal propensity of genius, to "accommodate the shows of things, to the desires of the mind," from a kind of *routine* of thought, solitary but enthusiastic, he is liable to become the victim of his own delusions. These delusions, at the same time, are seldom tempered, or, at least, not modified by that general experience, or experience of the world, which forms the sad, though perhaps, the soli-

tary corrective of those habits of mental indulgence, which prove so often fatal to the peace and welfare of their possessor: whereas, the former becomes confirmed in his active principles, by having his passive impressions continually influenced by a moral experience. So entirely does our moral improvement seem to depend upon our moral experience—the latter giving rise to the former, and afterwards confirming it. Our “bane and antidote” being thus placed before us, as it were, by nature herself, the question arises, does it depend entirely upon ourselves whether we avail us of these original, though somewhat inexplicable provisions of nature? The answer is perhaps obvious—something does depend upon ourselves; but more rests with education and our active principles. It has been objected to Rousseau’s system of Education, as unfolded in the *Emelius*, that it applies rather to the species than to the individual. It does not admit of those exceptions which nature herself seems to have been studious in forming; and which, in the persons of which men as Rousseau himself, and, in an equally remarkable degree, the subject of this inquiry, set at defiance alike

the wisest provisions of human experience, and the profoundest investigations of moral science. Rousseau's system of education, however perfect in theory it may be, admits not of being put into practice; and is perhaps one of the most visionary and gratuitous of the speculations of moral economy. Human life admits not in its every day and practical forms, of the concentration of those "traits of truth," which, according to Mr. Campbell, is more poetical than truth itself. Unhappily for man, his heart rather than his understanding, seems to require the aid of cultivation; while, at the same time, the latter is generally allowed to receive that degree and measure of care which had been, perhaps, more appropriately and happily bestowed upon the former. Professor Stewart observes of Locke, in his *View of the Progress of Metaphysical Philosophy*, that, "in every thing connected with the culture of the heart, he distrusted nature altogether; placing his sole reliance in the effect of a systematical and vigilant discipline." Mr. Stewart dissents from Locke upon this point, and takes occasion to remark that, the great object of education is "not to thwart and dis-

turb, but to study the aim and facilitate the accomplishment of the beneficial arrangements of nature." But surely this remark does not tend to affect the soundness of the doctrine broached by Locke. The heart is naturally prone to evil, and requires, therefore, the aid of this "systematical and vigilant discipline." We are inclined to believe that many a well-disposed mind has become depraved from the want of it; and that many an ill-disposed one has been reclaimed and corrected by it. There is a taint of originals in our nature—"for Virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we shall relish of it"—and it requires early and vigilant attention on the part of those who have the care of our education, to repress and to repel the first workings of that principle of evil which, however the idea may be reprobated as either false or irreverent, is still latent in the mind; and forever tending to counteract the benevolent suggestions of education, and afterwards of our moral experience. The mind left to itself, will frequently, by virtue of "the divinity that stirs within it," thrive and expand even under the pressure of adverse circumstances; but once neglect the heart, and it sinks to its

natural level—yields to its downward tendency—and travels the road to ruin with a facility the most disgusting, and a celerity the most incomputable. The Evangelist has, accordingly, with great beauty and justness of illustration, likened the nature of man to that of “the wild ass’s colt,” which must be *broke* before it can be tamed; and even then retains a portion of its original propensity to evil. But while this systematical and vigilant discipline which Locke recommends, seems to be essential in the culture of the moral powers, the misfortune is, that they will not always admit of it; because, as we shall have occasion more fully to remark, at that very period of life at which education should properly commence, the heart will generally be found, more particularly with minds of an higher order, and a certain constitutional temperament, to take upon *itself* the culture and direction of its powers. The poetical temperament is, beyond all others, liable to those inward influences, those original suggestions of its own exclusive nature which, while it should be the business of education to correct them, are beyond its power to controul—acquiring, as they do, their full force precisely at that period at

AN INQUIRY
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CERTAIN Critics of the present day, Puritans in morals, and Epicureans in philosophy, imagine they have discovered that all the regrets which have been poured over the tombs of ill-starred Genius, and all the sympathies which have been consecrated to its mournful memory, have been a species of mere *fanfaronades*, issuing from the lips of those who seem to think that the darkest sorrows of this life are the peculiar inheritance of inspired minds, and constitute the melancholy conditions upon which great talents are conferred. (*a*) They “can see no reason why men of genius should not be

mind, and a capricious choice of subjects for the exercise of its attention, but the result of its constitutional temperament and tendency ; and over this temperament and this tendency, education appears to us to exercise a very limited, or rather, a very questionable influence. No man's education was, perhaps, more faulty than that of Gibbon ; but we are not disposed, at the same time, to attribute to this circumstance, as many have done, the existence of that spirit of infidelity which has diffused a moral gloom around the splendours of his genius. We doubt whether the most rigid and unremitting system of education, would have exercised any very decided influence upon the character of his gorgeous and romantic mind. This powerful and original mind—constitutionally prone to excess—coming in contact with the gloomy but sublime fables of Antiquity, and, more particularly, the early and fascinating history of that splendid and almost fabulous People, the decline and fall of whose once boundless empire, he has recorded and commemorated with a spirit and a zeal, a fervour and an eloquence, not unworthy of the inspiring theme—this early initiation into the sublime mysteries

and moralities of ancient times—its Mythology, its Poetry, and its Heroism—over all of which there reigned a pure and beautiful delusion, and into all of which there was infused the spirit almost of another and an elder world than man's—thus educated, as it were, in the midst of all that was sublime in morals and in mind, grand and imposing, yet pure, primeval and visionary, even to romance, in character—dwelling continually in the midst of solemn forms, gorgeous emblems, and consecrated relics of things ineffable to the uninitiated, and for that reason awful and impressive—the mind of Gibbon became o'erinformed by the sublimities in which it was continually enveloped, and which, from administering to its high moral and intellectual cravings, with an

Even handed justice,
Commended th' ingredients of his poisoned chalice,
To his own lips.

And thus it would appear that, while education is unable to administer to minds of a certain constitutional temperament, such minds, at the same time, in the earliest stages of their development, by a congenial sympathy, a sort of principle of attraction, are found to yearn after and to embrace, with a fervour peculiar to genius,

precisely those studies which are in an eminent degree calculated to confirm this temperament. And thus it is by consequence, that those minds which "are of imagination all compact," are the least susceptible of that moral culture to which minds of an inferior order are perhaps exclusively indebted for every virtue which they may possess. And thus it is, by further consequence, that such minds are impelled and driven forward, as clouds obey the wind, in their meteor and erratic courses, by this powerful impulse which nature herself seems to have given; and which only acquires additional force by the aid of those circumstances to which they are subjected in obeying the very direction they have thus received. It is a little singular that Mr. Stewart should undertake to reject as false and mistaken, the very impartial estimate which Locke seems to have formed of his own character. He attributed to the education he had received, the existence of those moral qualities which, however, according to Mr. Stewart, "he owed to the regulating influence of his own reason, in fostering his natural dispositions." The writings of Locke could have afforded to Mr. Stewart no possible insight into what may

have been his "natural dispositions;" and in no other way, we presume, could he have become acquainted with them. When Locke assures us, therefore, that he owed the correction of his natural dispositions to the influence of education, we are surely bound to believe him, and to reject Mr. Stewart's opinion to the contrary. Mr. Stewart's remark, that nature should be left to "the accomplishment of her own beneficial arrangements," does not tend, we repeat, to impugn the force of Locke's position that, in the culture of the heart, education is alone to be relied on. When Mr. Stewart tells us, further, that "the great object of education is not to thwart, but to study the aim and facilitate the accomplishment of the arrangements of nature," he only repeats the observation of Rousseau which, however plausible it may appear, is without any foundation in reason. Nor will this subject admit of the common illustrations which have been brought to bear upon it. The growth of the child may certainly be impeded by those devices which are frequently employed in early life, in order to preserve the proportions of the body; and by bending the twig too far, you may retard the growth and

destroy the symmetry of the tree. But no illustrations derived from matter can throw any light upon mind ; and the education of moral and intelligent beings is not to be compared to the culture of trees. All men, at a certain time of life, undergo the same, or very nearly the same education, as relates both to morals and to mind. It is only at this age that education can be said " to study the aim and facilitate the accomplishment of the beneficial arrangements of nature." And yet, how does education effect this end ? or rather, can it be said to effect it at all ? How is the nature and disposition of the child to be discovered *before* this age ? And *after* it, the disposition, whatever it may be, has become so confirmed by nature herself, that it may be said to *react*—it assumes the reign and directs instead of being directed by education. The slightest observation, we apprehend, will have furnished the mind with this fact. It is with the moral as with the intellectual powers ; after having received a certain degree of culture, they are generally found to develop themselves. The direction which the mind is destined to take through life, usually discloses itself at an early period ; and if the bias be a

strong one, as in most gifted minds it is, so far from being able to eradicate, as many have supposed it capable of doing, education has scarcely sufficient power even to modify it. (*d*) Of what use then, it may be asked, is the culture of the moral powers? To this we would answer that, where the bias we have been speaking of, happens to be of a cheerful and practical nature, the effect of a proper education may be to strengthen and confirm it; and where it is of an opposite description, at least, perhaps, to temper and to modify it. But there are kinds and degrees of education very different in themselves, and producing, perhaps, equally opposite effects. Of these, the education by *example* appears to us to be the most practical in its tendency, and the most replete with moral dignity. But of this practical wisdom, supposing the example set to be at once characterised by virtue and intelligence, the mind cannot avail itself until its powers begin to unfold themselves—until the moral sense, which discriminates between the nicest shades of virtue and vice, right and wrong, has partially unfolded itself; and has commenced the first of that series of observa-

tions upon human life and character, which in turn afford to this sense those facts and that experience, which are essential to the success of its future investigations and inductions. It would seem to follow from this that, after the mind has once begun to unfold its powers, the moral character educates itself, from those patterns of truth and virtue set before it, silently inculcating what mere precept never can instil. From being continually in the presence of virtue, surrounded by its emblems and inspirations, Truth and Innocence, it seems to result almost as necessarily that the character should imbibe, if not the spirit, at least, the love of that which is pure, honourable, and humane, as that the copy should bear a resemblance to the thing copied. The moral character, we repeat, educates itself after the mind begins to unfold its powers. Before that period, what is commonly called education is, perhaps, the merest mummery and mockery in the world. Not but that there are a thousand things, whose influence upon the character of the man, may be traced down to their first effects upon the child: we would be understood expressly to speak of the formal inculcation

of moral principles at a very early period of life. This may be of service to coarse and common minds, incapable of instructing themselves, and requiring to be *drilled* into every thing. But to a mind born to think for itself, it merely affords subtleties for ingenuity to develope, and themes for the profoundest investigations of philosophy. It will be remembered, that we are speaking of the effect of moral culture upon the *poetical* mind. The effect of education upon its intellectual powers we apprehend to be the same, or very nearly so. We are almost tempted to think, that that perversion of the moral principle which dictated Swift's extraordinary conduct to Stella and Vanessa, was, in all probability, the result of the same cause which may be said, however remotely, to have occasioned his failure in obtaining a degree at Trinity College. And this cause will be found, we apprehend, to have lain in the weakness of those active principles which, if they be the source of practical virtue, suggest to the understanding at the same time, the propriety as well as the prudence of exerting its energies in cases in which the usual incentive to action, at least with the particular

mind we are considering, may be wanting—namely, that peculiar interest which such a mind usually imparts to its subject, and which in turn reflects a beauty and a grace upon this subject. We must beg of our readers to bear with us a little longer, while we proceed more particularly to investigate the subject of the active principles of our nature. In what appears to us to have been the extreme weakness of these principles, in the person of the extraordinary Individual whose moral character we have proposed for our theme, resulted many of those errors and misfortunes which threw a gloom over his eventful life, and constituted one of the many sources of his grief. For the mind of Lord Byron was keenly alive to a perception of its own frailties, over which his great and proud spirit wept in secret, with a deep and unutterable feeling. These remarks, moreover, are offered as perhaps affording a solution of the difficulty we set out with proposing to investigate—namely, that of supposing vicious habits to be blended in one and the same mind, with the most vivid and the purest impressions of virtue. The premises assumed by Bishop Butler in his *Analogy of Religion*, in

treating of the moral-approving and disapproving faculty, will be admitted, we apprehend, to be at once philosophical and just. From these premises therefore, we will proceed to make the obvious inductions, which are in favour of the moral character of Lord Byron. "Our perception of vice and virtue," says Butler, "arises from a comparison of the actions with the nature and capacities of the agent"—in other words, it depends almost entirely "upon the nature and capacities of the agent," whether the action be virtuous or otherwise. (*f*) In one man the same action would be positively vicious, which in another would be comparatively innocent, or at least, less vicious. We will not suppose an extreme case in order to evince this; because that would be to prove only what every one knows. We will not, for instance, take the case of a natural or a lunatic, who may have committed a murder, and say that because it was not his intention to murder, he is less criminal than another man who is guilty of the same crime, with the deliberate intention to kill. But we will take the case of a man whose passive impressions have been confirmed previous to the development of

his active principles ; whose morals have been depraved ere his understanding had unfolded itself ; with whom the moral-approving and disapproving faculty was no guide, because the agent had become confirmed in those actions which constitute the object of this faculty, ere the faculty itself had been developed—of a man who, when he came to know himself, found that he had contracted vicious habits without having known what vice was—of one with whom vice and virtue had been mere terms of relation, to which no definite ideas were attached—in short, we will take the case of a man like Lord Byron, and when we come to compare “ the actions with the nature and capacities of the agent,” the moral perception which must result from such comparison, appears to us to be decidedly in favour of his character. (*g*) The question has been asked, if virtue be a primary object of natural desire, how comes it that as such it is seldom sought, at least, in the way best calculated to obtain it? or when sought obtained? Whereas vice, its contrary, which cannot be considered an object of natural desire, is yet apparently often pursued, and as often obtained? To this it may be replied, that

virtue, as an object of natural desire, is a passive impression, and, unhappily for human nature, like all passive impressions, the stronger it is allowed to become, the weaker grows that habit or moral ability by which alone virtue is to be attained—the active principle or habit of practical exertion. The man whose delicacy of sentiment is most perfect, and whose passive impressions consequently are in the last degree refined, is less apt to acquire that habit of exertion which seems alone to be regarded as constituting virtue, than another man of less constitutional refinement. The latter, consequently, if not early initiated into practical habits, will be more liable to error and misconduct than the former; while, at the same time, as Adam Smith remarks, “this disposition, (delicacy of sentiment,) though it may be attended with many imperfections, is incompatible with any thing grossly criminal.” This disposition, he proceeds to observe, “is the happiest foundation on which the superstructure of perfect virtue can be built.” But, unhappily, this constitutional temperament is often so intense as to become dangerous; and has not unfrequently proved fatal to its possessor. The man of dull

moral perceptions, and of coarse moral constitution, on the contrary, is most easily susceptible of those practical habits which, in the end, undoubtedly lead to virtue—that is, to virtuous exertion. Before a man thus constituted, has ever “gone over the theory of virtue in his mind,” before his passive impressions have acquired strength, his active principles or habits of practical exertion, have been confirmed. (*h*) The passive impressions of such a person, are perhaps always weak, if not coarse and common; they are not likely, therefore, to acquire any influence; and can consequently form no obstacle to the attainment of those active habits, which are perhaps the stronger for the want of this original bias of the mind. This bias invariably disposes the mind to theoretical or speculative virtue; and can be overcome only by an early initiation into habits of a practical tendency. But, even then, it occasionally gets the better of those habits, and not unfrequently materially affects the happiness of the person who may yet appear to be absorbed in the traffic of the world. “Going over the theory of virtue in the mind,” says Bishop Butler, “is so far from implying a *habit* of it in him

who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible, that is, form a habit of insensibility to all moral considerations." (i) Experience and observation verify the truth of this remark. Passive habits, like all others, become the stronger from indulgence; and thus it is that "going over the theory of virtue in the mind," tends to produce a habit of passive exertion, if we may be allowed the expression, which opposes a fatal barrier to the formation of active principles. The man whose active principles have been confirmed by a long and rigid course of practical exertion, is generally lost to that delicate perception of moral beauty, which lights up and pervades the being of the man who has been in the habit of contemplating virtue in her abstract or ideal form. The latter may be said to "accommodate the shows of things to the desires of the mind;" whereas the former *brings down* those desires to the realities of things. There is, moreover, an intense though melancholy gratification in the indulgence of the former; while, at the same time, it flatters perhaps the vanity of our human nature. It is thereby one of those seduc-

tive habits which require, in order to be overcome, or at least, subdued in part, a degree of resolution which very few are found to possess—and least of all the man who indulges in the habit. The man who is in the practical habit of relieving distress, is less affected by the sight of it than the man who has been in the habit merely of going over the theory of benevolence in his mind. The former has acquired an aptness and dexterity in affording relief, to which the latter is a stranger ; and yet he may be deficient in that deep and genuine sensibility, which affects the man of passive habits even when the object of that sensibility is not immediately present to him. The former, notwithstanding, appears to the generality of persons to be possessed of those qualities in the very *absence* of which consists his virtue. But the very mere absence of active principles, where passive impressions are perfect, cannot be charged upon a man as vicious—although, as we have said before, there can be but little positive virtue where these are wanting. The only charge is, that, with these virtuous impressions, vicious habits are not unfrequently combined. Vice, not being an object of natural desire, the mind

cannot be supposed to form to itself a theory of it, and of "going over that theory" for its own sake, so as to form a passive habit of vicious indulgence. Were this the case, the mind would be satisfied with the mere theory; and virtuous habits would perhaps necessarily result. For the more we contemplate in theory the deformity of vice, the more struck we are with the beauty of the contrast which virtue affords to it—Mr. Pope's opinion to the contrary notwithstanding. (*k*) The man of virtuous passive impressions, we say, is often charged with being guilty of actions, perhaps a series of actions, that are esteemed vicious in the eyes of the world. A person of this description, however, it should be remembered, is deprived of that moral experience (as is applied in the notion of mere passive impressions) which affords to reason the matter whence that faculty makes its inductions; which are no other than those general rules and maxims in morals, which serve to guide and direct our conduct in cases in which the nicest casuistry would fail perhaps to furnish us with moral light. These general rules, whether of nature, or of positive law, or whether of morals, are

those inductions which reason makes from Experience. Experience offers to the consideration of reason, that various and compounded knowledge which it has gathered from its intercourse with the world; and reason, in its turn, proceeds to adjust, as it were, the relative value and comparative importance of this knowledge so obtained—and accordingly draws its inferences, and makes its inductions. This process, when completed, presents us with a set of rules that frequently possess the precision, and are susceptible of the demonstrative evidence of mathematical propositions—unallayed at the same time, by any admixture of that extraneous matter which enters into the composition of strict positive law. These general rules presuppose the antecedent knowledge of many particular cases of human conduct; they never, therefore, suggest themselves to the mind whose passive impressions imply habits of comparative seclusion and retirement from the busy scenes of active life. A mind under the influence of these habits has, consequently, little or no moral experience; and is therefore, by further consequence, unprovided with any practical guides to virtuous conduct. Ac-

tive principles imply nothing more than principles put into action, or practical conduct of any kind. These principles further, may be said only to illustrate the force of habit, and not the sense of duty. It is of little moment whether these principles be employed in effecting positive good to others, or in preserving such a tenor of conduct as merely results in the absence of ill to ourselves. But the man whose moral constitution is made up of mere passive impressions, in whom the elements of good remain unwrought into any system of practical conduct, is very apt, if occasionally forced into collision with the rough habits of the world, to perceive the want of those practical principles which he is made to *feel* lie at the bottom, and form the basis of the conduct of those around him. Such a person, therefore, is easily *misunderstood*—he himself, perhaps, feels that his intentions at least are misconstrued—he conceives immediate disgust, and proceeds to wreak, as it were, this feeling of offended virtue in an *opposite* course of conduct from the one he at first attempted to pursue, but which he finds, as he thinks, is impracticable—inasmuch as it has given offence, and has been misinterpreted. It is

impossible to calculate the measure of ill which almost necessarily results from this *forced reaction* of feelings that are in themselves virtuous and intensely vivid but which have been repulsed, sometimes with coldness, but oftener with indignity, in their first timid, yet open and generous advances to the world. It is certainly a melancholy mode of retaliating the wrongs we may have received from others, by rushing upon the commission of wrong to ourselves; and of redressing the feelings of our injured virtue, by subjecting those feelings to situations in which their susceptibility can expect only to receive further injury. There is no feeling of our nature so liable to be wounded as that of conscious virtue. Offended Pride may be conciliated—offended Vanity may be cajoled—even offended Honour may be appeased, but offended Virtue admits of no atonement. If wounded, it pines like the melancholy Eagle, and so dies; no sound escapes, a look of ineffable contempt is all that tells the wretch who gave the blow, how insignificant he is. This virtue, however, is by no means so secure and independent of fortune, and of the caprice and ignorance of those we live with, as many have

supposed it to be. It is, undoubtedly, its own and sole reward in the end, but still it is dependent for a temporary satisfaction upon the reception it may meet with from the world. But, unhappily for that satisfaction, this reception is generally such as to displease and disappoint, to rebuke and to rebuff,--melancholy and chagrin, united at first with something of resentment, is the almost necessary consequence. And it is as impossible to answer for the conduct of the man whose mind is under the combined influence of these powerful and subduing emotions, as it is "impossible to answer for the conduct of the man who is without a *home*." This seems to be the only solution of the difficulty of supposing a naturally virtuous mind retaining, to the last, the impressions and the forms, the emblems and the inspirations of virtue, and yet yielding with a facile flexibility to the seductive allurements and temptations of vice. There is, perhaps, another circumstance to be considered in cases of this sort, because it tends in a considerable degree to account for, and, at the same time, to excuse, or at least to palliate the inconsistency we have been supposing. It is admitted, we believe, that the capacity for

good and evil, for happiness and misery, is greater and more powerful in a mind of acute sensibility, than in one of a contrary temperament. The temperament of that mind whose powers are in the degree which constitutes genius, is one morbidly predisposed to intense emotion. Such a mind is possessed of an appetite for profound feeling, a yearning after those situations of the heart which involve directly and decisively its nearest and its dearest interests, and which present the alternatives of life and death, as it were, to its immediate option. The moral cravings of a mind of this cast must be satisfied; it feeds no doubt on bitter fruits, but these in time become to be its nutriment—and, like the Pontic king whose daily food consisted of poisonous herbs, a mind thus constituted, will not only convert the most wholesome food into actual poison, but will in turn subsist upon it. This morbid temperament of mind, we say, is not easily administered to—while, at the same time, it is for ever reaching after extremes in feeling and situation; and, like a moral Procrustes, it proceeds, always, to adjust these extremes by a *forced* action, whereby they are accommodated to its

desires, and suited to its dimensions. These extremes in feeling and situation, are not to be found in ordinary life ; least of all are they objects of desire to a mind that has been sobered down by habits of practical exertion. The man of morbid temperament, therefore, must either feign or create them for himself. He does, in fact, both the one and the other—as is implied, first, in the force of his passive impressions—and, next, in the rejection, as it were, of those impressions, when they were attempted to be submitted in practice to the world. He both feigns and creates, we say, these fatal extremes. First, he feigns them, when, *previous* to the confirmation of his passive impressions, these extremes may be said to figure in the imagination as mere fictions of feeling ; but fictions, at the same time, which, like those of imaginary history, “accommodates the shows of things to the desires of the mind.”—And next, he creates them, when, *after* the formation of his active principles, having made an effort, of which he is seldom conscious, to put these principles into practice, but finding, to his cost, that their tendency is not practical, he sets about to retaliate the injustice which he

conceives himself to have sustained in the rejection of these principles by the practical part of the world, the only portion of it to which they can prove offensive. He creates these extremes, we repeat, when he sets about to retaliate the injustice he conceives himself to have sustained, because, this retaliation can be effected only in one way—not in requiting society, for the evil it has done him, with good to that society, but with evil to himself. This, as we have said before, is no doubt a melancholy mode of retaliation ; (1) and “ sweet revenge grows harsh ” in the end—but still it is sweet, while obtaining, and even for some time after it is obtained, to the person who conceives himself injured, and who, therefore, seeks and desires it. Thus is the man of morbid constitution abandoned to the wing of fiery instincts, which hurry him into excesses that seem to compensate, by their intensity, for the want of that more rational, though somewhat dull and uniform enjoyment, that would have resulted from the early and steady exercise of the active principles of our nature. Although, in a case of this kind, the party who suffers most, be, undoubtedly, the individual himself ; yet, as

we have said before, society is also a sufferer in its moral interests, and to a greater degree, perhaps, than is generally supposed. It may be objected to this theory, that it is too abstract; perhaps it is, we know not, however, whether it be wholly so. The chief admission we take for granted—that the constitution of certain minds is precisely such as we have been supposing. The main argument, which ensues from this admission, as to the effects resulting from such a constitution of mind, may have been carried too far—this, however, remains to be shown. It may be retorted upon us, if a man bring with him into society fantastic and far-fetched notions upon points of vital interest to that society, if he presume to set up a standard of his own, as the sole and ultimate criterion of right and wrong, and the infallible test of the moral worth of those around him, is it either strange or unjust that society should *reject* such notions, and, along with them, the person himself, whose conduct is, perhaps, but a bad illustration of a worse theory? This, however, would be to suppose what never yet has happened or can happen. No man, we apprehend, was ever guilty of the preposterous error, of believ-

ing himself capable of making a convert of society to his own individual notions of any kind. On the contrary, what perhaps inspires his disgust and gives him offence is, the discovery that society is not only disposed, nay, prepared to make a convert of *him*, even to "the bitter letter," but that it is apt to resort to violent measures in the attempt, and to redouble that violence where the attempt has failed. The language which society addresses to him, is neither calculated to convince his reason, nor to conciliate his pride—it is this—"Your ways are bad—mend them—or you shall suffer for them." We have thus endeavoured to point out the difference between the imaginative and all other minds. We have attempted to show, that the tendencies of the poetical mind are less practical than those of any other—in short, that it is of a temperament morbidly pre-disposed. A morbidly pre-disposed mind, is one generally addicted to those extremes in feeling and situation, which commonly result in that moral emasculation that incapacitates the individual for pursuing those practical ends, the proper efforts at attaining which, society presupposes in its very formation—and in the ac-

tual attainment of which, its well-being is involved. The individual thus incapacitated for the practical purposes of society, is scarcely recognized as one of its members—he is, in a great measure, disconnected with the social contract—his interests are, of course, not involved in the general interest—nor are they the interests of those immediately around him—he has, therefore, comparatively nothing at stake. What life-guards of conduct can such an individual be supposed to possess? And it is in a case of this kind, and in all similar cases, that the strength of passive impressions is so destructive of moral virtue. Passive impressions, thus confirmed, incapacitate the individual for the practical ends of society, while society turns its back upon him for not pursuing those ends. The moment he is found holding himself aloof from society, society conceives a doubt of his character—and “to be once in doubt, is once to be resolved, and on the proof”—which society is very ingenious in furnishing—“no more but this,”—he is banished by sentence of a moral ostracism. The man who has thus become a sentimental outlaw, who has been thus ejected beyond the pale of

the moral virtues, is “let down the wind to prey at fortune ;” and if he become, by consequence, addicted to extremes and excesses of conduct, is it at all to be wondered at?(*m*) The application of these remarks to the life and character of Lord Byron, will be acknowledged, we apprehend, upon mature reflection. We trust too, that their tendency to point out and to maintain that moral balance, which may be said to subsist between society and its members—between the institutions of society, on the one hand, and the moral failings, and, at the same time, the moral accountability of its members on the other, will also be admitted. We are induced to believe, therefore, that, in the application of these remarks to the character of Lord Byron, the ingenuous reader, who may be imbued with a love of genius even to a forgiveness of its frailties, will have perceived the extenuation, which we trust they carry with them, of the moral failings of One who combined, in an extraordinary degree, that genius with those frailties. What remains to be said of the writings of Lord Byron will have, we are aware, but little of novelty to recommend it. For upwards of thirteen years, he has

been continually before the public, the most distinguished and successful candidate for literary fame. It would have been extraordinary, therefore, if his merits as a poet had not been repeatedly and thoroughly investigated. But, while all have united in admiring his genius, few, perhaps, comparatively, are familiar with its more interesting and profounder traits; or possessed of that thorough acquaintance with his writings, which must always generate a deeper love for them, and secure to them, if we mistake not, the applause of other minds in other times. From a few general remarks upon the nature and tendency of poetical composition, we will pass, therefore, to a brief consideration of those extraordinary productions, which have delighted and astonished the age; and which—the drama of Shakspeare alone excepted—compose a body of the most singular and original poetry in the language. The distinction which obtains, according to the elder Schelgel, between the Ancient and Modern, or classical and romantic drama, may be applied to modern poetry, in general, as distinguished from that of the ancients. The poetry of the latter was the poetry of the imagination; but

the moderns may be said to have invented, and to have appropriated to themselves the poetry of the passions. With regard to the nature and tendency of poetry, the subject has been so repeatedly handled, that we feel great reluctance in entering upon it here. Lord Bacon's celebrated remark, in relation to poetry, that it seeks to "accommodate the shows of things to the desires of the mind," appears, to us, to explain, in a few words, its nature and tendency. The Sage applied this observation, as is well known, to "Imaginary History" or Fiction. Under this general head, however, are included a great many works which are, at the same time, widely different in themselves—and, comparatively, wanting in that deeper interest, and those more passionate and universal associations, which characterize the higher productions of the poet. It is, perhaps, not unworthy of remark, that, while Lord Bacon, with a depth of feeling and a spirit of philosophy rarely combined, has afforded to the mind, in a few words, perhaps the deepest insight it can acquire into the true nature and tendency of poetry, he should, at the same time, have been so far misled by general terms, and the ideas com-

monly annexed to them, as to have confounded it with "Imaginary History," or Fiction. Were we to overlook fact, and to regard the narrative of De Foe as a fiction, it is one of those fictions which, to a certain degree, "accommodate the shows of things to the desires of the mind"—and yet, it is not poetry. The Arabian Nights are a series of beautiful fictions, and as such, as mere "imaginary history," they "accommodate the shows of things to the desires of the mind"—while, at the same time, they do not constitute a body of poetry—which, notwithstanding, is capable of effecting nothing beyond a similar accommodation. The higher kinds of poetry, whether epic or dramatic, cannot, when philosophically considered, be termed fictions; although their whole merit will be found to resolve itself into this very accommodation which they afford of "the shows of things to the desires of the mind." This may appear contradictory, but we should be sorry did it not admit of an explanation sufficiently satisfactory. The tragic Drama, and all poetry of the higher class, have their foundation in those deeper passions of which human nature is essentially compounded—which are the immediate and inexhaustible

source of all its hopes and affections, in short, of its happiness and misery. The associations which belong to these passions are universal: and, though slightly modified in a few instances, are, upon the whole, every where the same. If these passions be admitted to enter into the composition of all poetry, properly considered, and, in fact, to constitute the basis of all the more serious creations of the Muse, the distinction between poetry and mere imaginary history, and the reason why the one should achieve and affect more, and rank infinitely higher than the other, will appear, we think, sufficiently obvious. They both “accommodate the shows of things to the desires of the mind,” but this accommodation is widely different in the one case from what it is in the other. In the first place, mere fiction or imaginary history, addresses itself to the fancy, and to the fancy alone. Whereas poetry, such as we have been considering it, appeals to a deeper and more universal source of emotion — the heart, which, it has been well observed by Dr. Blair, “judges more nicely than the imagination.” There are, certainly, many poems which address themselves rather to the fancy than the feelings; and some that ap-

peal exclusively to the fancy ; but they are, for that very reason, the less interesting ; and, we cannot but think, inferior to those works which either blend the creations of the fancy with the emotions of passion, or which turn upon some event that, in connection with human character, attaches and rivets human sympathy. Hamlet and Othello we apprehend to be greater efforts of genius than the Orlando or the Fairy Queen ; and, in point of human interest, no one will deny that they are infinitely superior. The merit of the latter poems, as works of imagination, replete with the beauties of fancy and the energies of thought, remains undiminished at the same time. The cold abstractions of Lycidas and Comus, fatigue and deaden on the attention. There is a brilliant but frigid vein of imagination pervading these poems, which reminds us of those beautiful masses of Frostwork, that attract the eye while they repel the approach. We do not know that we could select a more striking instance, in order to prove that the works which most truly and forcibly “accommodate the shows of things to the desires of the mind,” are not those the most replete with the “airy nothings” of the imagination, than

the Masque of Comus. Dr. Johnson tells us that it was founded upon some events which actually occurred in the family of the Earl of Bridgewater, with whom Milton was personally acquainted. And what was the nature of these events? Precisely such as a young gentleman of spirit would esteem most fortunate, as affording him an opportunity for the display of his gallantry. If there be any accommodation, such as Bacon speaks of, to be met with in this poem, it is but limited, and, at best, of an inferior kind. And herein it is, that the distinction obtains between poetry properly considered, and mere fiction or imaginary history. Although, as we have just remarked, they both aim at "accommodating the shows of things to the desires of the mind," yet there is so wide a difference in the degree and manner in which this accommodation is afforded in the one, from what it is in the other, that to compare poetry with fiction or imaginary history, understanding these terms as we have endeavoured to explain them, would be to compare two things almost totally dissimilar. The geometer participates with the poet in that quality which is commonly regarded as peculiarly characteristic of the lat-

ter, Imagination — but no one, at the same time, we apprehend, would think of comparing the two minds on that account. It is in the force of this “accommodation of the shows of things to the desires of the mind,” that the merit of all poetry consists, in a greater or lesser degree, according to circumstances. We cannot expect this accommodation, in all its fulness, in a poem like the *Paradise Lost*, or in any poem that is not replete with human agency. Even in such poems, however, this accommodation is effected to a certain degree. That it should not be so complete as it is in the drama, is in no way surprising when we come to reflect that its fulness and perfection depend upon the agency of passions and affections, which are almost wholly excluded from such poems. The very little of human agency employed in the *Paradise Lost*, is incapable of affording this accommodation beyond a very slight degree, from the circumstance of this agency, inconsiderable as it is, being of the most simple and uninteresting kind. What interest can the mind possibly take in two such amiable and inoffensive mortals as Adam and Eve? Or at least, is there any portion of that passionate and dramatic interest infused into the

mind by the contemptible uxoriousness of the one, and the equally contemptible vanity of the other, which invest the character and fortunes of those "Beings of the mind," who live and are destined to live for ever in the cherishing love and devotion of the heart? We repeat, that the "accommodation of the shows of things to the desires of the mind," can never be as full and perfect as when it is afforded through the medium of human passions and affections giving rise to, and afterwards confirming human character. (n) If this be admitted as incontrovertible, it will not be difficult to account for the very extraordinary impression which the poetry of Lord Byron is known to have produced upon the public mind. Many critics have been disposed to attribute a portion of that effect to the universal sympathy which seems to have been consecrated to his melancholy fortunes. That there should have been a degree of personal interest attaching to all and every thing the most remotely connected with the history and character of so impassioned, so elevated, and so eloquent a Being, was not perhaps to be wondered at; nor was it by any means discreditable either to the heads or hearts of those,

who entertained the feeling divested of the levity of the weak, and the calculating curiosity of the malignant. But that the partial decline of this feeling (for we cannot think that it is destined wholly to pass away, as long as the heart retains the sympathies of its better nature) with the death of the extraordinary individual in whom it was centred, will be in the slightest degree calculated, as it has been contended, to lessen the popularity of his works, or to weaken the force of that more mysterious attraction which weds them to the heart, is what we are by no means prepared to admit. On the contrary, if there be a mournful love which binds us to the dead, if there be a feeling of deep and eternal regret connected with the memory of what they were, and were perhaps to us—and if there live within the heart a strong and bitter sense of indignation at the wrongs they may have suffered—and a silent sleepless sorrow which embalms in its tears the recollection of their misfortunes—and if there survive those whom *we* loved, the offspring whom *they* loved, in whose pale and bereaved countenances we trace the living features of those who have ceased to live—and if we are for ever listening from

their lips the tale of all they thought and felt, and loved and suffered—their days and nights of anguish—the faithless hope—the blighted love—the pride bowed and wounded—the calumny which hoarded its venom like the adder to poison truth and wither happiness—in short, the utter destitution of feelings without a hope to soothe or an object to confide in—if these be the ties which bound us to the living, and such the interest which their lives inspired, we cannot but think that both these ties and this interest, so far from losing, are likely to acquire additional force when death has torn the object from our hearts, and the grave has closed for ever between eternity and time. Such are the feelings inspired by the writings of Lord Byron, and such are the feelings, we apprehend, which they are destined to inspire in the minds of the posterity of a thousand centuries. Who can believe for a moment, that time or circumstance will ever have any effect in lessening the surpassing splendours of Childe Harold? We know not whether there be any poetry in any language, which so wonderfully combines the sublime with the beautiful---the awful and the grand with the tender and pathetic, as that

which burns and breathes in every page of that splendid production—without a parallel in modern poetry. For where shall we look for a similar union of the terrible graces of poetry with its softer and more conciliating features? Where shall we find the immortal genius of classic antiquity worshipped with such fervour of devotion, or celebrated with such eloquence of language and such energy of thought, as characterize the descriptions of the Apollo, the Laocoon, and the Dying Gladiator? Where shall we find the form and face of nature depicted with such “traits of truth,” as in the description of Evening on the shores of Lake Lemman in the III. and of Sunset on the banks of the Brenta in the IV. Canto of the Pilgrimage? It is hardly possible to say that the one description excels the other—but the former is so true to nature, and to that deep and ineffable feeling which the heart imbibes from being continually in her presence, that we think we shall be pardoned for quoting it here, familiar as we presume it must be to most of our readers. Standing upon the banks of the Lake after sunset, the congenial mind of the melan-

choly Childe is thus led to commune with the Spirit of the place :

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darken'd Jura, whose cap't heights appear
Precipitously steep ; and drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood ; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good night carol more.

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill ; (o)
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes,
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

The above stanzas are the overflowing of a mind familiar beyond example with the delightful mysteries of solitude, and imbued with a deep and ineffable love of its endearing sights and sounds. They afford a striking refutation of Lord Byron's own remark in relation to De-

scriptive Poetry, that “it is the lowest branch of the art.” There are four lines succeeding this exquisite description, which are more beautifully illustrative of the truth of Mr. Campbell’s remark in relation to the genius of Shakespeare, that “his *mutability*, like the precariousness of human life, often deepens the impressions which he creates,” than any thing we know of in all poetry—unless it be that of the great Bard himself, to whom the remark originally applied. The lines to which we allude, form the commencement of the XCVIII. stanza of the same Canto. (III.)

The Morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contain'd no tomb !

The idea in the last line is at once sublime and affecting—while the thought is altogether original, though it may not appear so at first. It has no analogy whatever to the common place remark, that the generality of men live as though they forgot they were to die. It is a beautiful and pathetic comment upon the want of sympathy between the moral and the natural world—or rather, the total want of feeling which

the latter evinces in the fortunes of the former—and the cold majestic indifference with which she looks down upon all that either gladdens or afflicts the heart. Man, by the inscrutable impulses of his being, is led to sympathize with the vicissitudes of Nature. He rejoices with the Spring, saddens with the Autumn, and sorrows with the Winter of the year. But Nature holds her course aloof from the concerns of man, uninfluenced by his “petty griefs and evils of a day”—and even at the moment when his heart is bursting over its bereavements, she comes forth,

With breath all incense, and with cheeks all bloom,
And living as if earth contained no tomb !

But incomparably the finest of those sublime descriptions of nature and art with which the Pilgrimage abounds, is that of the celebrated Falls of the Velino. It is perhaps the sublimest description of a natural object, that ever kindled into words. The concluding Stanza we have often regarded as, in a remarkable degree, applicable to the character of the whole poem itself. It is more finely and justly descriptive of those alternations of gloom and of

gladness, of hope and despair, and of that struggle, so conspicuous throughout, and so fearfully sustained, between the darker suggestions and the better feelings of a great and noble nature, than the most laboured exposition could possibly be.

Horribly beautiful ! but on the verge,
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
Its steady dyes, while all around is torn.
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn ;
Resembling 'mid the torture of the scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

The impression made upon the mind, and the image of grandeur and of power presented to it in this wonderful description, are likely however to give place to other and more affecting feelings, forced upon us in certain succeeding stanzas of the same Canto. If there be any one thing in this canto, not finer, but more touching and more terrible than another, and which is perhaps alone sufficient to rank it infinitely beyond the others, it is the awful and appalling imprecation which an injured and indignant Mortal,

standing in the Grove of the Furies, and under the terrible inspirations of the place, invokes upon the heads of those who,

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy,

had exhausted the vile ingenuity of their natures in attempts at poisoning his peace, and throwing a moral gloom around his fame. The Critic who will undertake to tell us that the instances of sublime description to which we have alluded, are in the smallest degree indebted, for any portion of their intrinsic effect, to that sympathy which the well known fortunes of the noble writer were eminently calculated to inspire, may indeed advance a plausible opinion, but it will be at the expence of his judgment. To tell us, further, that the consequence of the Poet's having infused so much of his own character into all that he has written will be, that when this character shall have ceased to inspire a living interest, (as in the course of time it must do, when the writer shall have shared the common lot of mortality) that much of the merit of his writings, dependent as it was upon this personal sympathy, will be lost, or will,

at least, fail of a portion of its original effect, is to assume a position which, as we have before remarked, is warranted neither by philosophy, nor a correct knowledge of human nature. For, in the first place, we deny, upon the ground of those sympathies which are deeply and immutably seated in the nature of man, that this principle of Self, which may be said to pervade the writings of Lord Byron, can ever cease wholly to operate even upon the minds of those who shall remain for ever ignorant of what were either his errors or his misfortunes. It will be of little importance for them to know where the noble sufferer was born—

To whom related, or by whom begot;

—what were the nature of the wrongs he bore, or in what manner they were inflicted—it will be sufficient for them to know that he *was* a sufferer, and had wrongs to be forgiven;

Hopes sapped—name blighted—life's life lied away.

It will be enough for them to feel and know this, in order to sympathize profoundly with those emotions of the soul, which have thrown a melancholy gloom around the sublimest in-

spirations of the Bard. And, in the next place, even admitting that this personal interest should be lost upon the minds of another generation, yet will the passions and the principles which pervade his writings, remain the same. For these principles and these passions are essentially those of human nature—but human nature elevated to that standard, which is at once the limit and the test of poetical invention. Mr. Campbell has very justly remarked of poetry, that it “has a right to the highest possible virtues of human character.” It has an equal right, we apprehend, to the highest possible *vices* of character. Probability and possibility, however, are very different degrees of contingency; and it will be seen that Mr. Campbell, whose opinion is entitled to some weight upon this subject, assigns an almost impalpable limit to the Poet’s conceptions of human nature, when he gives them the boundless range of possibility. But who will undertake to say that he is wrong? Who will attempt to fathom the depths of space, or ascertain its limits? But, it may be said, we give up our old position, that the merit of poetical invention is to be tested according to its approach to, or departure from

this standard of probability, or possibility, if you please, and assume another, which cannot be objected to, because it is perfectly natural. It is perfectly natural that we should like that which is agreeable, and dislike that which is otherwise. It is perfectly natural that we should estimate that which is accordant to our feelings, beyond that which is repugnant to them. It is perfectly natural that we should be partial to virtuous and averse from vicious characters—that we should love virtue and abhor vice. If these be admitted as moral axioms, it will not be difficult to account for the general preference which mankind have always evinced for those writings which inculcate sentiments congenial with virtue, and which present us with characters in whose fortunes we can sympathize, because they are represented as beings constituted like ourselves—over those which do violence to our nature by representing it as subject to the basest influences—a wretched compound of all that is unprincipled and unfeeling. The truth of this reasoning, however, lies rather in appearance than in reality. It is not true, even when applied to actual and every day life, The most amiable persons are not always the most

agreeable ; nor are the most moral always the most interesting. The virtues of such persons are generally of the negative kind ; and even where they are of a positive nature, they are still of the simple and familiar class—and will commonly be found to consist in the very absence of those qualities, which impart to higher characters the interest, and, as frequently, the love which they inspire. We do not design by these remarks any disparagement to the gentler virtues and charities of life. On the contrary, no one can respect them more sincerely than ourselves, when they are under the direction of a liberal and enlightened mind. All that we mean to say is, that these virtues are not of that high and impassioned nature, which confers upon character a marked individuality—and that we would not unwillingly forego a portion of the former, for a little of the inspiration of the latter. If this be admitted in relation to actual life, how much more true is it in reference to poetry, which aims at “accommodating the shows of things to the desires of the mind.” These desires, at the same time, are far from being as humble and as limited as in many cases they are supposed to be. Of this “every

man," as Burke would say, "ought to be the best judge in his own forum"—but the fact seems to be, that every man is not capable of tracing the sources of his own emotions, or of analysing these emotions when felt. The gratification which we derive from representations of life and character as surrounded by circumstances, and assailed by events the most afflicting, is by no means the immediate result of such representations in themselves; but may be accounted for in the circumstance of their appealing to those sympathies of our nature which delight in, or rather subsist upon intense emotion—in short, from the accommodation which they afford "of the shows of things to the desires of the mind." The stronger the impression made, the more permanent it becomes; and there is always a call for such appeals to our sympathies. It is these chiefly which sustain existence, and render us sensibly alive to it. There is a natural propensity in our natures to awaken and indulge in strong sensation—an appetite for intense feeling, more general, perhaps, than we are either aware of, or willing to allow. Nor is this very extraordinary. Upon attending to the nature of our

own emotions, it will be found that there is a character in suffering, which absorbs the mental energies to an intensity that rewards itself. This holds true, at least, of those representations of suffering which, while they do not present us with pictures drawn too nearly to the life, or marked by circumstances at which the mind revolts, afford a soothing melancholy exercise to the powers of our moral being. (*p*)

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroyed
Even by the sufferer.

Downright agony, like darkness, although it be characterized by traits of great sublimity, is too strong a privation to be *sought after* by the mind ; there is nothing sufficiently definite in it to afford repose or relaxation to the feelings. While those exhibitions, and the sensations arising from them of pain, that are tempered by certain alleviating circumstances, are in the highest degree productive of that moral enthusiasm, which is at once the distinction and the privilege of our nature. They may be said to resemble that dubious Twilight which lingers after Sunset, and which is one of the most powerful sources of the sublime. Who that ever

studied the two Faces in that divine production of Romney, representing the bard of Avon nursed by the tragic and comic Muse, but must have felt and owned the truth and energy, the depth and fulness of expression pourtrayed in the countenance of the tragic Muse, which told that her devotions were not of this world, and that her aspirations were fixed upon the immensity and sublimity of Heaven? It is upon this ground, upon the ground of those passions which are universal and eternal, that Lord Byron's claims to the remembrance and admiration of posterity, must be admitted to rest. He appears to us to stand unrivalled and alone in his conception and expression of Passion. By passion, we would be understood here to mean that peculiar and intense sensibility to the impressions of Female beauty, which pervades every page of his writings. The generality of poets, Shakspeare himself not excepted, describe Beauty with the cold precision of the connoisseur in art, who, from having his mind early chilled and cramped by the formality of a certain set of rules and pre-conceived opinions, is most sensibly alive to the perception of blemishes, and who can see no beauty where there

is the slightest departure from these rules. Burke distinguishes very nicely, "between a clear expression and a strong expression;" "these," he observes, "are frequently confounded with each other, though they are in reality extremely different—the former regards the understanding—the latter belongs to the passions—the one describes a thing as it is, the other as it is felt." Precisely such, we apprehend, is the distinction which obtains between the genius of the poet and the artist. The latter understands, the former feels—the one admires, the other loves that which is beautiful. The beauty of *expression* is rarely admitted by the artist, while it carries a deep and ineffable feeling to the heart of the poet. There are a thousand associations gathering around a beautiful object, which affect the latter independent of its beauty. The artist sees nothing beyond the mere *dead letter*, as it were, of visual or physical beauty. It would be almost endless to quote from the writings of Lord Byron, passages illustrative of that deep feeling for the beautiful and passionate, which was, perhaps, the characteristic of his wonderful mind. But we cannot refrain from citing two instances, one

from the 'Corsair, and the other from Parisina, which have always appeared to us to carry the most powerful and affecting appeal, to the sympathy and sensibility of the reader. Describing the grief of Medora, in the parting scene between Conrad and herself, the Poet has presented us with, perhaps, the most passionate and affecting picture, of that "brokenness of heart" occasioned by the loss of those we love, that is to be met with in all poetry. The description of the parting between Hector and Andromache, cannot compare with it in tenderness and pathos, which is all that we look for in such descriptions.

She rose—she sprung—she clung to his embrace,
Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face.
He dared not raise to his that deep blue eye,
Which downcast droop'd in tearless agony.
Scarce beat that bosom where his image dwelt,
So full—*that* feeling seemed almost unfelt!
Again—again—her form he madly press'd,
Which mutely clasp'd, imploringly caress'd!
O'er every feature of that still, pale face,
Had sorrow fix'd what time can ne'er erase:
The tender blue of that large loving eye,
Grew frozen with its gaze on vacancy,
Till—Oh, how far—it caught a glimpse of him,
And then it flow'd—and phrenzied seem'd to swim,

Through those long, dark, and glistening lashes dew'd
 With drops of sadness oft to be renew'd.
 "He's gone!"—against her heart that hand is driven,
 Convulsed and quick—then gently raised to heaven;
 She looked and saw the heaving of the main,
 The white sail set—she dared not look again—
 But turn'd with sickening soul within the gate,
 "It is no dream—and I am desolate!"

In the above description, the form, the face, the attitude, but above all, *the imploring eye* of the beautiful and forsaken Medora, are pictured to the fancy in all the eloquence of truth, and the sad reality of life. The other example is to be found in Parasina, who is represented, after the detection of her guilt, as bound and fettered by the side of Hugo, her youthful paramour—

Of that false Son, and daring lover!

—in expectation of the sentence, which an injured husband was about to pass upon their guilty loves.

The minion of his father's bride,—
 He too is fettered by her side;
 Nor sees her swoln and full eye swim
 Less for her own despair than him;
 Those lids o'er which the violet vein,
 Wandering, leaves a tender stain,

Shining thro' the smoothest white
That e'er did softest kiss invite—
Now seem'd with hot and livid glow
To press, not shade the orbs below ;
Which glance so heavily, and fill,
As tear on tear grows gathering still.
She stood, I said, all pale and still,
The living cause of Hugo's ill ;
Her eyes unmov'd, but fixed and wide,
Not once had turn'd to either side—
Nor once did those sweet eye-lids close,
Or shade the glance o'er which they rose ;
But round their orbs of deepest blue,
The circling white dilated grew—
And there with glassy gaze she stood,
As ice were in her curdled blood ;
 But every now and then a tear,
So large and slowly gather'd slid
From the dark fringe of that fair lid,
 It was a thing to see, not hear !
And they who saw it did surprise,
Such drops could fall from human eyes.

Words are too weak, we think, to express the fulness of the feeling conveyed in these lines—but we never saw grief and passion so deeply, so eloquently blended in any human face, as in that of *Parasina*, young, beautiful, and lost ! One more instance occurs to our recollection, in the following stanza from the first Canto of *Don Juan*. Julia's fondness for Juan is depicted in a few lines, which convey the

tenderness, the melancholy, and the dubiousness of early passion, with a truth and beauty which is without a parallel in modern poetry :

And if she met him, though she smil'd no more,
She look'd a sadness sweeter than her smile,
And if her heart had deeper thoughts in store,
She must not own, but cherish'd more the while,
For that compression in its burning core ;
Even Innocence itself has many a wile,
And will not dare to trust itself with truth,
And love is taught hypocrisy from youth.

There is a deep and plaintive beauty in these lines, which has always had an inexpressible charm for our feelings. That the Being in whose soul dwelt such conceptions and such forms of beauty—such passionate desires, for ever reaching after the unattainable and the indefinite, and seeking relief in disappointment, by wreaking his whole being upon the expression of that disappointment—that such a being should have been unhappy, and even incapacitated for the free exercise of the humbler duties and practical purposes of life, is only what might have been predicated of the peculiar constitution of his character. Whatever may have been the errors of Lord Byron's life, they

were evidently those of a great and uncontroulable mind. His heart, we are persuaded, never conceived one ungenerous thought, nor prompted to one ignoble action. It was the mind, the burning restless mind, that o'er-informed his feelings. His heart appeared to weep over the frailties it never gave birth to, and could not controul. There was an eternal action and reaction going on between his feelings and his understanding. But, unhappily for his peace, the former always maintained the ascendancy they had early acquired over the latter. Setting aside all consideration of the effects which are supposed to result from a neglected education, and early habits—

———those false links that bind
At times the loftiest to the meanest mind—

—we are tempted to think that Lord Byron's genius was that of intense and peculiar temperament, which admits of no other modification than that, which the gradual confirmation of an original and powerful but unhappy bias, is calculated to effect. And, as there is nothing which acquires strength so much from indulgence, as that morbid sensibility which is peculiar to genius, there is nothing so difficult to

oppose—and yet so destructive of happiness for the want of discipline. We will not permit ourselves to dwell upon the private life and conduct of Lord Byron. We will not, however we might, anticipate the ever equitable verdict of Posterity, or even of the present age, when it shall bring itself to sit, dispassionately, in judgment upon what may have been the moral failings of so extraordinary a character—a character so liable to be misunderstood. It is sacred ground at best, and peculiarly such at present. His awful ashes have not had time to grow cold, and his wounded and insulted Spirit scarcely yet reposes from the indignities and the afflictions which it bore in life. We may be permitted to remark, however, in relation to the unhappy occurrences of his domestic life, that the many harsh judgments which have been passed upon his conduct, argue both a want of feeling and of sense. There is something so sacred in the privacy of domestic life, that, even at this distance of time and place,* it is with the greatest reluctance that we permit ourselves to allude to the unhappy circumstances which occasioned the separation of

* This passage was written when the author was in America.

Lord Byron from his family; and which embittered every hour of his short but eventful life. That privacy, however, has been broken in upon and violated—and we should be wanting in the deep love we entertain for his memory, did we not express our unqualified contempt for the base calumnies which the vulgar, the unfeeling, and the designing have propagated against his fame; and which Impudence, “ever ready to *hitch* itself into notoriety,” has laboured to perpetuate. We can never believe that he was the criminal being he is represented to have been, because no proof, except such as has been furnished by those who were his avowed and bitter enemies, has been adduced in support of the charges which have been preferred against his life. It is the characteristic of a weak mind to misconstrue that which it cannot comprehend, and of a bad heart to visit upon others the obloquy which it knows attaches to itself. It is mortifying and almost discouraging to reflect, how much the loftiest mind is at the mercy of the meanest. It is the supreme consolation of Dulness to volunteer its strictures upon Genius; and to arraign it at the tribunal of its own narrow conceptions

and unenlightened humanity, in all the exclusive inveteracy of ignorance, and in all the despotism of a partial and bigoted prepossession. We cannot disguise the firm conviction we have always entertained, that Lord Byron was not alone responsible for the unhappy rupture, which has given rise to so many unfeeling and impertinent speculations. It rarely happens that *one* only of any two parties to a question, whether at civil or at moral law, is convicted of having been so much in error as he is represented to have been. This may be called a weak argument, but are there any *facts* in existence calculated to refute it? If there be not, then the presumption is in favour of the innocence of the accused, until his guilt shall have been established. The peace and security of domestic life depend so much upon contingencies, which it is impossible either to anticipate or to avert, that an honourable mind will seldom permit itself to form a positive judgment in any case of social differences. Without affection and the faith which it inspires, without the most unbounded mutual confidence among those who are members of the same family, the happiness and quiet of the domestic circle is liable to

momentary and final interruption. From all that has transpired, it would appear that there reigned but little of this spirit of amity in the family of Lord Byron. On the contrary, a deliberate system of domestic *espionage* seems to have been set on foot, which, whatever may have suggested it or been its views, had no other effect than that of confirming the errors it may have been designed to correct, by offending the pride it was by no means calculated to conciliate. Nothing has the effect of wounding so deeply, as the appearance of distrust in those who should either love or know us better than to doubt us. But

Constancy lives in realms above.

The heart is strangely tempered, and will not unfrequently wound where it loves most. In the deep pathos of the following Stanza from Don Juan, we trace what had been the feelings and reflections of Lord Byron, upon the memorable and melancholy occasion to which they evidently have reference.

Whate'er had been his worthlessness or worth,
Poor fellow ! he had many things to wound him
Let's own, since it can do no good on earth ;
It was a trying moment that which found him

Standing alone beside his desolate hearth,
Where all his household Gods lay shiver'd round him !
No choice was left his feelings or his pride.

It is impossible to read these lines without the deep and grateful conviction, that the heart from which they flowed, must have been replete with the finest and the noblest feelings. We can well imagine the bitter and indignant emotions, with which such a heart must have regarded the many efforts that were made to poison its peace, and the unfounded but pointed calumnies which were levelled at its fame. We forbear noticing the common-place and contemptible charges which, among others, have been preferred against the character of Lord Byron, of having deserted his country, and of having promulgated sentiments inimical to virtue, further than to remark, that such charges, the poor resort in general of the malevolent, afford, in the present instance, strong evidence of that littleness of feeling and that low malice, which seem to be inherent in the nature of many minds. In relation to the stale charge of Infidelity, it is not borne out by any evidence afforded either by his writings or his life. On the contrary, there are many passages in his

works, which tend directly to refute it. With regard to that of having deserted his country, we do not know that the quarter from which it has emanated, carries with it sufficient weight either of character or of talent, to entitle this charge to our notice, even were it not the weakest and the most contemptible alternative to which impudence and malevolence were ever driven, in their unremitting efforts to defame and to disparage all that is worthy either of love or admiration. What has been alleged of the immorality of Don Juan, merits, perhaps, a brief consideration. It is not because the million have condemned this extraordinary production, in all that exclusiveness of narrow minds which confounds good with evil, and right with wrong, that we are led to notice it. It is because we consider it the most remarkable record of human feelings and human frailties, that Genius ever prepared for the moral instruction of mankind. We cannot but regard this Poem in the light of a great and luminous Moral, inculcated and enforced by all the eloquence of one of the most inspired minds that ever descended upon mortal. Those who maintain the contrary, would do well, instead of in-

dulging in vague declamation about virtues which they themselves in all probability never possessed, to point out by what process it is that this work is calculated to produce the mischievous consequences they affect to apprehend from it. Dr. Johnson, who was both a good Christian and a sound Moralist, entertained a very different opinion of the tendency of such works. To maintain that the mind which is so familiar with scenes of licentiousness as to depict them in all the fidelity of living truth, must be itself contaminated, is an argument long since exploded as carrying with it not the slightest degree of conviction. Even admitting, however, that the heart may be acquainted with vice under all its disguises, the Mind is for ever above the grossness of the Senses; and hovers aloof, never an impassive spectator of the progress of the feelings, but the sternest and most enlightened Censor of their ways. And thus it is, that a man of Genius is never a gross Voluptuary, whose ideas extend not beyond the gratification of his passions—but has his “bane and antidote” continually before him. We know not whether there be a more effectual mode of visiting

reprehension upon vice, than that of selecting, as it were, a living example of the miseries which finally result from yielding with too great a facility to its seductive allurements. In all such representations, if grossness of language and of sentiment be avoided, the effect will be, at least with minds that have been properly educated, to confirm and not to shake the principles of Virtue. In *Don Juan* there is a total freedom from this grossness of sentiment and of language. There is, at the same time, so much fine reflection and finer poetry scattered throughout the work, that if there be any poison in its pages, they must be admitted to carry with them not the least effectual of antidotes. Upon a question of Morals, however, every individual has undoubtedly the right of judging for himself. What, therefore, may be the final decision of this or another age upon the subject of the moral tendency of this remarkable production, we will not pretend to anticipate. For ourselves, however, we are far from thinking that it merits the reprehension which has been visited upon it—and this for the reasons we have ventured to assign. There is a vein of profound moral reflection pervading

the whole work, which, in the midst of what appears to be the grossest licentiousness, ever and anon recalls the mind from the allurements of the Passions, to ponder upon the vanity of human life and its enjoyments; and, with a stern and rigid impartiality, to ask itself the melancholy question, whether the very means which we adopt for promoting our happiness, be not those precisely calculated to defeat it, and to ensure misery in its stead? Such, we acknowledge, is the painful doubt with which we have always been inspired upon closing the pages of this affecting and eloquent production. That it was conceived under a deep and solemn conviction—the result not so much of the original conclusions of a powerful mind, as of a profound moral experience—that the pleasures of this life end in the bitterest privations, and that happiness is at once an empty and a fatal *purchase*, those who are familiar with what was the intense and peculiar moral and intellectual temperament of the writer, will not permit themselves to doubt. The conjecture which has been hazarded by certain Newspaper Editors in America, that had Lord Byron lived, he would probably have deteriorated as a writer,

reminds us of the assiduity of the Cruscan Critics, who endeavoured to persuade Alfonso that Tasso had lost his fire, and that it would be well for him to remain in idleness and obscurity for the rest of his days! The supposition is perfectly gratuitous, but the insinuation is utterly base. And yet what can be expected from men, who permitted themselves to throw a slur even upon the noble exertions which the Patriot Genius of the immortal Bard, with a fervour and a zeal characteristic of his mighty Spirit, had devoted to the cause of freedom and mankind? We had been almost tempted to think that if ever there was one being more than another, who could have claimed an exemption from the common doom of mortality—who, as was said of Augustus Cæsar, “should never have been born, or should never have died”—that Lord Byron was that being. But upon further reflection it appears to us that his death, occurring at the time and place it did, is rather to be envied than lamented—“and though he died in his prime,” to borrow the beautiful idea, and equally beautiful language of a friend and relative, “to fall from the Meridian is to fall in the midst of glory.”

One more topic we shall briefly touch upon, and our grateful task is done. We shall have borne our humble tribute to the Worth which we loved, and to the Genius which we admired. We shall have lifted our voice, however feebly, in vindication of the Fame which we have held, and shall always hold sacred—the only legacy which Genius bequeaths to those whom it leaves behind to deplore its loss, and to despair of ever attaining to that high eminence from which they have been accustomed to behold and adore it—but which evil tongues have sought to sully and to wound. “If the Spirit of Byron,” to borrow again from one whose sentiments do honour to human nature, “can suffer a pang in another world, it must be at having his memory insulted by those who had rendered his life unhappy; and that through the unworthiness, if not the treachery of a friend.” This remark alludes to the conduct of Mr. Moore, to whom Lord Byron, in the unsuspecting confidence of friendship, consigned the Manuscript Memoirs of his Life. Incapable, it would appear, of appreciating either the honour or the favour which had been conferred—for it will be remembered that the Manuscript was given to Mr.

Moore, with the generous view of relieving him, by the proceeds of the sale, from the pecuniary embarrassments under which he then laboured—he teacherously delivered it into the hands of persons, who had a double motive for pursuing the dishonourable course of consigning the Manuscript to the flames. An instinctive regard for reputation, however worthless, will sometimes prompt the meanest to gather up and cherish even the wrecks of their moral character, with an exclusive jealousy not uncharacteristic of the miser, who sits by day and sleeps by night upon his hoard, a human Incubus. The obligation incurred by Mr. Moore, the moment that he consented to become the depository of the Memoirs of Lord Byron's life, was one of the most sacred that could have devolved upon man. It was emphatically a moral contract, to which Mr. Moore may be said to have been the principal party. The very reverse of a contract at civil law, the death of one of the parties imposed upon the other the most solemn obligation literally to fulfil the conditions of the charter-party. The death of Lord Byron, so far from absolving Mr. Moore from the engagement he had entered into, placed him, in the eyes of God and

man, in a relation infinitely more sacred and more solemn, than any created by the natural obligations or moral duties of life. The truth was at length to be told;—the long agitated question was, at last, to have a final hearing on both sides;—it was solemnly to be determined before an impartial tribunal, whether the verdict which was to acquit or to condemn the moral lives of two or more human beings, was to be given against *one* only of the parties who stood on trial; and whether, in accordance with that verdict, the final sentence was to be passed upon that party. Such was the solemn crisis in which Mr Moore was called upon to give in the important and decisive testimony in his possession, upon which alone depended the equitable balance of the scales. And how did he act? What was the conduct of Mr. Moore? We do not mean to reflect upon the moral character of the age when we say, that an independent and honourable answer to this question is, perhaps, reserved for posterity. The *Memoirs of Lord Byron's Life*, were a legacy bequeathed, not alone to the present age or to Mr. Moore, but to Posterity. A future age will not be indifferent to the moral character of

a Man, the immortal products of whose genius, as a precious and distinguished inheritance, it will be proud to claim and solicitous to cherish. Delighted and astonished at the achievements of that genius, tracing in the sublime and eloquent effusions of the Bard, the sorrows and misfortunes that assailed the Man; sympathizing with that brokenness of spirit whose voice of grief, alternately plaintive and indignant, faintly rises, and with irresistible pathos, in the Giaour, and, acquiring a deeper and more solemn energy from inspiration, bursts in loud lament in the Childe Harold—and which, addressing itself to the better and profounder feelings, elicits all the sensibility of the heart—thus influenced and thus appealed to, will not the lovers of Genius in another generation, be solicitous to acquire some insight into the moral life and character of the Individual, who will thus have rendered himself an object, at once, of their admiration and their sympathy? Will they not unite in asking for some record, more faithful and circumstantial than that which is afforded in the *Lament* of the Bard, of those privations and afflictions which imparted a sad celebrity to his life, and which, by forcibly

ejecting him from his country and his home, shortened, perhaps, the brilliant career of his genius? But what will be their indignation when they learn, as most assuredly they will—for those who induced Mr. Moore, from paltry temporary considerations, to compromise his honour, will not have it in their power to furnish his moral character with a passport to posterity—that such a record *had* been prepared for them, and prepared too by this Individual himself—but that, through misplaced confidence, it had been consigned to a friend, with a solemn injunction that, after his death, it should be given to the world, as containing a vindication of his slandered and violated life, and that this friend—lost to the recollection of their friendship—lost to himself, to honour, and to human nature—to every consideration, divine and human, that could bind a man—violated that injunction—and, with a faithlessness which in the annals of moral turpitude stands distinguished and alone—destroyed this record—consigned to the flames the moral memory of his Friend! We do not know that Mr. Moore, who styled himself the friend of Lord Byron, can be called to a sufficiently se-

vere account for such conduct—dishonourable in itself, and in the last degree insulting to the Memory of the illustrious Dead, whose character has been already but too much violated—as far as Baseness can pervert, or Dullness can defame. And yet what else than Faithlessness and Ingratitude could have been expected of a man who had no sooner turned his back upon America, where he had been received and treated with the utmost courtesy and kindness, than he conceived the vile purpose to traduce it, and belied the very persons whose hospitality had welcomed him to their shores? Should these pages ever meet his eyes, he will learn that, among the thousands who have vindicated and applauded his conduct, there exists one who, however humble he may be, presumes to entertain and to express the most profound contempt for his character. With regard to the great and gallant Spirit whose confidence he has betrayed, and whose memory he has insulted, the most remarkable man of the times, his Writings will afford to Posterity the chief illustration of the age in which he lived. When the errors of his life, which, whatever they were, were those rather of the head than of the heart, shall have

been forgotten, when even the sympathy which has been consecrated to his "living agonies" shall be no more, the pure light of his Genius will emerge from darkness into day, a brighter Luminary in a world more happy.

SINCE this pamphlet came from the hands of the binder, we have been furnished with good reasons for believing, that the act whereby the Memoirs of Lord Byron's Life were consigned to the flames, cannot in justice be visited upon Mr. Moore. Cut off as we were in America from all authentic sources of information upon this subject, we conceived ourselves authorised in forming the opinion we have expressed, from the discussions and expositions to which the burning of the Memoirs gave rise in this country. The authority upon which we have been induced thus to cancel and recal what we have said relative to Mr. Moore, we have every reason for believing to be at once correct and honourable. At the same time, as in a Court of Law, every man in giving evidence is put upon his oath, we are compelled to express ourselves cautiously in what we now say, guided as we are by the simple, though solemn assurance of a single individual. For the present, therefore, we shall suspend our opinion upon this subject. In the

mean time, for what *has* been said, we beg leave to tender to Mr. Moore our not insincere regret; hoping and believing that the time is not far distant, when he will have it in his power to furnish forth to the world the most unequivocal testimony to what, as far as our knowledge of circumstances extends, we now believe to have been the honourable disinterestedness of his conduct in relation to the moral memory of his illustrious Friend and Countryman.

NOTES.

(a) Of this species of *fanfaronades*, M. De. Staël, among others, is guilty when she observes, in one of her eloquent and passionate Letters upon the life and writings of Rousseau, "It is perhaps at the expense of happiness that great talents are conferred. Nature, as if exhausted by these magnificent presents, often refuses to great men the qualities which might render them happy."

(b) North American Review, July 1822.

(c) This doctrine, which seems to have originated with M. de. Staël, or was at all events supported by her with considerable ingenuity and more zeal, has been ridiculed by some and reprobated by others, as frivolous and presumptuous; but without having received that degree of attention which, as a topic at least of interesting speculation, it seems to merit. Addison, it is well known, has deduced a strong hypothetical argument in favour of the doctrine of the soul's Immortality, from the circumstance of its continually progressing towards perfection, without ever attaining to it. Johnson, likewise, seems to treat the notion as fantastic and visionary, when he observes, in the preface to his Dictionary, "To pursue perfection is to chase the sun, which, when we reach the hill where he seems to set, is still behind at the same distance from us." This, however, is to evade and not to investigate the subject. We trust we shall not be accused of an *ignorantia eelenchi* when we remark that, of such a state of being we cannot be said to have any just notions, because we are unable to determine first, what are the various components, their qualities, and the degrees of those qualities, which would be constitutive of such a state. Perfection, even relatively considered, admits of no definition; and of that which cannot be defined, we can have no just idea. Perfection, moreover, is strictly a *condition*, and not a *quality*. To speak of it therefore as an attribute of the Deity, is to confound a state of Being with those qualities or any one of them, of which no state is originally compounded—which are adherent to it—and which it ne-

cessarily presupposes. Were we to allow ourselves to express in a few words, the only notion we can have of perfection, as derived from the description of the moral Eden of our first Parents, ere sin had entered the garden, we should characterize it as a state of *positive negation*—and this without involving a paradox. Such it certainly was as it existed in Paradise; although we are by no means prepared to say that such is perfection, as we would understand the term—whether the moral perfection of a Socrates, or the intellectual perfection of a Newton—yet such was the perfection of Adam and Eve. Milton represents the former propounding various questions to Raphael, which implied a degree of ignorance which, while it may be said to have constituted the test of his obedience, would have been incompatible with a state of absolute perfection. Adam, ere he had committed sin, knew not what it was, or that he was capable of it; for the very cautions of the Angel were calculated to confirm him in the belief of his positive exemption from all frailty. His having been free from sin, therefore, previous to his eating of the Apple, implied no positive moral virtue. His Innocence was the result, not of a perception of, and consequent adherence to virtue—it was the necessary consequence of his ignorance of evil—and in so far, it was a mere absence from it. Adam was forbidden the tree of knowledge, he could therefore have known nothing—and knowing nothing, he was ignorant—and being ignorant, his ignorance implied his innocence.

The tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.

Adam experienced this truth to his cost. He ceased to be innocent the moment he partook of Knowledge. Would the perfection of the intellectual, imply that of the moral powers? Or would the perfection of any one intellectual, imply that of any one moral power? And further, would the perfection of the moral powers imply perfect happiness? There is perhaps a moral answer to these questions, not altogether unsatisfactory. In the first place, the fundamental doctrine of Natural Law, that man should be allowed to pursue his own happiness in his own way, would, in the case of a perfect moral agent, need no inculcation, because perfect happiness would be implied in such a case. In the next place, perfection in this world would be entirely out of its element; and the opposition and reviling that would most inevitably attend it here, would evince that it was regarded as an intrusive visitation upon human nature—a sarcastic comment upon its wretched frailties. In other words, perfection would be incompatible with the melancholy conditions upon which we hold the tenure of life; and in the ultimate fulfilment of which, the covenant betwixt God and his Creatures remains to be redeemed by the latter. That “special Providence” which, we are told, is made manifest “even

in the fall of a sparrow," would, in the case of a perfect moral being, be induced from its own high moral sense,—which necessarily prompts to a justification of its ways to man,—to suspend the operation of those "accidental possibilities," as well as those positive evils, which are incidental to time and human nature. M. De Staël defines perfection in Writing to consist, "Rather in measure than diffuseness—in that which an author always is, than in that which he shows himself sometimes to be—in a word, perfection gives the idea of proportion rather than grandeur." This is, perhaps, the perfection of the Arts and Sciences. And it may be the perfection to which the human mind is supposed capable of attaining. But if it be, we fear *that* mind must be admitted to have declined from, rather than approximated to the standard here prescribed, since the days of Homer and Sophocles, of Socrates and Demosthenes—and, though last not least, of those immortal Artists whose works have survived their names through a long lapse of ages. The Homeric poems seem to be regarded as the very perfection of the Epic Fable. The drama of Æschylus and Sophocles is characterized by a simplicity of parts, and a unity and singleness of purpose, which, with a few exceptions, we look for in vain in the modern theatre. Demosthenes is equally a model, we are assured, to which nothing has approached in the senate of succeeding nations; and the statues and Architectural Remains of early Greece, have been alike the admiration and the despair of modern times. Whether the inference be admissible, that the mind which produced these models must necessarily have been perfect, would never perhaps have been a question, had we been able to determine whether the perfection of these models was of a positive and abstract nature, or only relative. But to have determined this point, would have been in itself an evidence of this very perfection.

(d) Hence, we have always regarded as gratuitous and as unfounded in fact or philosophy, the common observation, that many minds of the highest order have been lost to the literary world, from having been *accidentally diverted* from the pursuits of literature to those of politics, war, or some one of the learned professions. We have had occasion to notice this opinion as broached by Dr. Currie, among others, in his biography of Robert Burns. The writer, in dwelling upon what he terms the *universality* of the poetical mind, remarks, that the same mind which composed the Homeric poems, might, under different discipline, have led armies to the field, or elevated its possessor to the highest honours of the Forum. Now, of all others, the poetical mind is perhaps the least ductile; and is more immediately and powerfully influenced by that constitutional bias, which we have supposed to give direction to all minds of a higher order. And it is only of such minds that we would be understood to speak. You cannot

make a race-horse of a mule, but the mule may be put to any labour, and may be beat to the performance of any drudgery. Dean Swift, had he been disposed to avail himself of the influence which he exercised over the minds of Harley and St. John, might probably have obtained a seat in the Cabinet; but the direction and tendency of his mind was originally and irrevocably averse from politics. He occasionally embarked in those of his time, it is true, but only as a writer. Milton was appointed Latin secretary under Cromwell, by whom he was liberally patronized; but the poet predominated over the politician in his constitution; and the immortal Bard was more congenially employed in composing the *Paradise Lost*, than the *Populo Anglicano Defensio*. But, setting fact aside, philosophy will be admitted to bear us out upon this point. Dr. Johnson defines genius to be "a mind of enlarged general powers, *accidentally* turned to some particular pursuit." We have never regarded this definition of genius as being strictly correct. Who can believe for a moment, that the mind of Napoleon Bonaparte was destined to achieve any other exploits than those which have immortalised his name? Or that the genius of Lord Byron was destined to eminence in any other pursuit, than the one in which it has so often "felt with the ardour, and debated with the eloquence of heaven?" We have no objection to suppose the mind of a man of genius to be one of general powers; but to suppose these powers to be at the *mercy* of any bias that accident may impart, is to suppose one of those "accidental possibilities," which have been long since regarded as either *above* the comprehension, or *below* the serious attention of a philosopher. But to suppose the mind of a man of genius to be one merely of general powers, it is not to distinguish it from other minds of a high order. Shakspeare's mind was one of general powers, so was Lord Bacon's; but the quality or attribute of genius which properly discriminates between the two minds is, that *vis vivida* or intellectual enthusiasm, which transported the universal Bard beyond the bounds of Time, and made him almost familiar with Eternity. And this is the quality which, while it is perhaps the characteristic of every mind whose powers lie within the department of the Fine Arts, is more particularly the emblem and inspiration of the Poetical. And it is in such minds chiefly, that the constitutional bias we have been speaking of, is to be met with in all the force of an original principle. The mind of every man of genius is one of general powers; and such a mind, although it be destined for some particular pursuit congenial with its powers, and calculated, therefore, to elicit them in all their force, will necessarily distinguish itself in any department of human pursuit to which its attention may be called for a time. It is upon this ground, that we are disposed to deny the claims that have been set up for Lord Wellington as a man of genius. As a great military Commander he is second only to Bonaparte himself; but upon the

score of original powers of mind—pure mind in the abstract—we apprehend that not even the warmest admirers of the Englishman, would dream of comparing him with the wonderful Corsican. Bonaparte was perhaps as conspicuous in the Cabinet as in the field. But Lord Wellington, whether debating in the House of Lords, or negotiating with the Allied Sovereigns at Vienna, presents the somewhat awkward and humiliating spectacle of a man, placed in a situation involving a degree of responsibility beyond his powers of mind to sustain. The general superiority of Bonaparte's mind over that of Lord Wellington, can only be accounted for, therefore, in the original superiority of his genius, or the general powers of his mind. The stronger the original bias given to the mind, the more inevitable seems to be its tendency to some particular sphere of exertion, to which that bias may incline. And, although this bias will be found to characterize every mind whose powers are in the degree which constitutes genius, it is, as we have already observed, more immediately the distinction, and perhaps the *Conservator* of those minds whose powers lie in the department of the Fine Arts. The minds of such men as Bacon and Locke, although of the highest order, were not characterized by that intensity of the intellectual temperament, which is the distinguishing trait in the poetical mind. Bacon, at the same time, was a man of more sensibility than Locke. His celebrated remark in relation to Poetry, that it seeks to "accommodate the shows of things to the desires of the mind," evinces, as Mr. Campbell has observed, "a sensibility in the Sage, as deep as his wisdom." But, at the same time, we can more easily believe, that both Bacon and Locke might have been statesmen instead of philosophers, than that Shakspeare and Milton might have been philosophers instead of poets. But while this acuteness of the intellectual temperament is at once the distinction and the inspiration of the poetical mind, it is, at the same time, the profound and inexhaustible source of those not fictitious woes which, while they seem to impart a fervour and elasticity to the wing, carry not unfrequently to the heart of genius, the dampness of death, and even the darkness of despair. And—to borrow the beautiful idea of Lord Byron—as the pinion which sustains the Eagle in his flight, not unfrequently affords its own feather to the shaft which stretches him upon the plain, so those powers of the poetical mind which constitute its greatness and ensure its immortality, appear to be incompatible with its happiness—and wound the heart, while they prompt and inspire the understanding. This is, perhaps, a melancholy truth; and one of which the extraordinary Individual who forms the subject of this Inquiry affords a still more melancholy illustration.

(f) We are sensible that in arguing as we have done upon the words of Bishop Butler quoted in the text, we subject ourselves to the charge of having grossly perverted their meaning and tendency. If

we have done so, still we think the distinction between the "actions and the nature and capacities of the Agent," a happy one, and greatly to our purpose. The Bishop, we shall be told, designed to say in fewer and plainer words, that the more enlightened the Agent, the freer he should be from all frailty. But, however plausible and rational this may sound, we must remember that there is a wide difference between that which we *are*, and that which we *should* be. And, however true in the abstract it may be, that in proportion to our wisdom should be our virtue, fact and observation refute the idea notwithstanding. But, it will be said again, we know this, and so much the worse—but still we maintain our position. The fact of a man's being vicious, affords no argument against the position that he should be virtuous. But, morally and not philosophically speaking, it appears to us that the existence of vice is no weak argument against the possibility of virtue. And we cannot but regard the contrary argument urged against us, as resolving itself into a *begging of the question*. It is, perhaps, nothing more than a fine abstraction, or *Beau Ideal* of thought. If it be admitted, and we do not think it will be denied, that great virtue has frequently been united to but little wisdom, and the greatest wisdom to but little virtue—and further, if it be shown, as we have attempted to show, how it is that the greatest mind may be the least virtuous, understanding this term with certain restrictions, we do not think we shall be amenable to criticism, for having perverted or misconstrued the words of Bishop Butler quoted in the text.

(*) The following observations, from Part V. of the Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful, appear to us to coincide with what has been said above; and tend to throw considerable light upon the subject. "Mr. Locke," says Burke, "has somewhere observed, with his usual sagacity, that most general words, those belonging to virtue and vice, good and evil, especially, are taught before the particular modes of action, to which they belong, are presented to the mind; and with them the love of the one and the abhorrence of the other. When, afterwards, the several occurrences of life come to be applied to these words, and that which is pleasant often appears under the name of evil, and what is disagreeable to nature, is called good and virtuous, a strange confusion of ideas and affections arises in the minds of many, and an appearance of no small *contradiction between their notions and their actions*. There are many who love virtue and who detest vice, and this not from hypocrisy or affectation, who, notwithstanding, very frequently act ill and wickedly in *particulars*, without the least remorse, because these particular occasions never came into view, when the passions on the side of virtue were so warmly affected by certain words heated originally by the breath of others." These observations are as striking, as they are philosophical

and just. The general words here spoken of, are usually acquired at a time of life when it is impossible that the mind should attach any definite ideas to them ; because the force and clearness of these ideas depend upon an experience, whether personal or acquired, of those occasions and modes of action to which they relate. And this experience must always, in the course of nature, be subsequent to an acquaintance with those general words which, apart, at the same time, from this experience, carry no meaning with them to the mind ; and tend on that account to lead it astray. This, therefore, is one of those moral evils which no education can remedy—if it be not, in fact, one of the imperfections of education itself. But the misfortune seems to be, not merely that these words are taught previous to an experience of those occasions to which they apply, but that they have been allowed too wide, and, consequently, too vague an application. *Virtue* and *Honour*, are words which nature seems to have intended to convey the same ideas ; and yet, from early and false associations, we come at length to attach very different meanings to them. That which is often termed *virtuous*, is not always reconcilable to our notions of that which is *honorable* ; and that which is esteemed *honorable*, still more rarely implies that which is *virtuous*. The word *Virtue* in the Latin, implies physical as well as moral merit ; and in the English its meaning is almost as unrestricted and indeterminate. By what process of analogy or induction it was, that the Romans came to render this word expressive of bodily strength, we do not pretend to determine ; but we know that among that warlike people, bodily strength was not unfrequently viewed in the light of that moral quality, to which alone perhaps the term is applicable. The case appears to be somewhat similar with the word *Honour*. The celebrated oration of Mark Antony over the dead body of Cæsar, may be regarded as a severe comment upon the vague notions generally attached to this word. The noble Triumvir inveighs in a strain of keen and bitter sarcasm, against the base conduct of Brutus and the rest of the Conspirators,

Who bowed like bondmen, kissing Cæsar's feet ;
Whilst damned Casca, like a cur, behind,
Struck Cæsar on the neck.

And yet, says the Orator,

Brutus is an honorable man,
So are they all, all honorable men !

It is not merely then, that general words are taught before the occasions are known to which they apply, it is that their application is too general and indeterminate. It is not merely that the words *virtue* and *honor* are acquired as mere sounds, before the mind has any correspondent notion of the sense they are intended to convey, it is that

this sense varies—and seems to be one thing to-day, and another to-morrow. The consequence of all this very frequently is, particularly with minds of an ardent temperament, that when such minds come to think and examine for themselves, and have acquired from experience and observation that knowledge of things, which is widely different from a knowledge of words, they are led to detect the errors of early associations; and the want of that consistency between what they see and what they have been taught, without which the most fatal misapprehension of important truths is likely to prevail. The mind which has been thus duped and led astray by false associations of words, is generally disposed to review and revise all that it has acquired in its early and impassive state—and the result of this moral retrospection, is as generally the erection of a system of its own in matters in which it has been thus deceived by the vagueness of general terms.

(A) This may seem an invidious distinction, but it is one, nevertheless, sanctioned by our actual observation; and, we doubt not, by that of almost every other man.

(i) Analogy of religion. Part I. Chap. V.

(k) Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace. ESSAY ON MAN.

When the Poet wrote the above lines, he must have designed them to apply exclusively to the man of vicious practical habits; and they certainly apply with great truth in such a case—although they are not very original as a practical observation, nor very just as a philosophical induction.

(l) It is certainly retaliation upon society in the end; because society suffers to a certain degree from the vices of individuals.

(m) Lord Bolingbroke is of opinion, that a man will profit by the experience he may acquire in the world, according to the temper and habit of mind which may have been *previously* unfolded and formed. "The same experience," he observes, "which secures the judgment of one man or incites him to virtue, shall lead another man into error, or plunge him into vice."* The truth of this remark has been illustrated, we fear, by the moral failings of many virtuous minds; and is a circumstance to be accounted for only in the way in which we have at-

* Letters on the study of history. Letter 11. p. 25.

tempted to explain it. The same writer observes, that the chief advantage to be derived from the study of history is, "that it *prepares* us for experience, and *guides* us in it." This observation, however, will by no means admit of an universal application. Were it unexceptionably true, that this study, or any other, is capable of preparing us for an intercourse with the world, the very cases we have been supposing would be the less pardonable; and indeed could scarce possibly occur. History, which has been denominated or defined, "Philosophy teaching by example," has certainly its uses; but we fear that the influence of its precepts and examples on the moral character, will never be accounted in the number. The topic, doubtless, might afford many curious and perhaps useful speculations. Before, however, we could hope to establish the doctrine of the practical uses of history, we should have to encounter the Moral Philosophy of Adam Smith—particularly those parts of his Theory of Moral Sentiments, which treat of the nature and origin of the principle of Moral Approbation.

(n) In the Vth. part of his Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful, Burke remarks, "So little does poetry depend for its effect upon the power of raising *sensible images*, that I am convinced it would lose a very considerable part of its energy, if this were the necessary result of all description." And yet, in one of the earlier numbers of the Quarterly Review, (for 1810, we believe) we are told that it is this very power of raising sensible images, which constitutes the great merit of Sir Walter Scott's poetry. When the Reviewer observes, in allusion to his poetry, that it "strikingly illustrates the analogy between poetry and painting," the remark will be admitted, we think, to imply the power of raising sensible images—a power which Burke denies to poetry. The fact is, however, that this power must be conceded to poetry. It appears to us to be the distinguishing feature in that of Sir Walter Scott; although it by no means implies that botanic accuracy in delineating natural objects, which Mr. Bowles contends for; and which is peculiar to the descriptive branch of poetry—the lowest branch of the art according to Lord Byron. Poetry may present us with the finest and the most affecting pictures or images, without any laboured process of the kind. In fact, this minuteness of detail is destructive of that instantaneous and striking effect, which is always produced by fine poetry. It may be said to *hunt down* the image so completely, that the mind either passes it over altogether, or but indistinctly perceives it. Poetry, in order to raise images of objects, whether animate or inanimate, has only to concentrate those "traits of truth," which are immediately and every where acknowledged. In the following extract from Lord Byron's beautiful poem called the Dream, we are presented, by a few genuine touches, with an Eastern picture perhaps more perfect, even in its literal form, than Painting could possibly have rendered it.

He lay

Reposing from the noontide sultriness,
Couch'd among fallen columns, in the shade
Of ruin'd walls that had survived the names
Of those who reared them; by his sleeping side
Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds
Were fastened near a fountain; and a man,
Clad in a flowing garb, did watch the while,
While many of his tribe slumbered around;
And they were canopied by the blue sky,
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
That God alone was to be seen in heaven.

There is nothing of labour or minuteness in the above exquisite description. The touches of the wonderful Artist are few but graphic—light but distinct, and vivid, yet perfectly clear. Had Burke lived to read these lines, he would have been forced to acknowledge that they present one of the most beautiful of “sensible images”—and would have been led to form a very different opinion of the powers of poetry, from the one which he seems to have entertained. That there are many abstractions which poetry is incapable of representing, is no argument against its power of raising or presenting pictures of such objects as our senses are conversant with. Painting itself, is incapable of embodying certain abstract ideas. When Burke tells us, therefore, that Virgil's description of the formation of the thunder under the hammer of the Cyclops, conveys no image whatever of the thing described, we would ask whether any painting could present us with an image or picture of a mere effect in nature? No poetry or painting can embody the thunder, because we cannot embody objects of sound.

(e) These lines will probably remind the Reader of Moore's beautiful translation of Anacreon's Ode to this musical little insect,

In wisdom mirthful, wise in mirth.

(p) This objection lies with peculiar force against the tragedy of “middling life,” as it has been termed by Mr. Campbell. So far from “accommodating the shows of things to the desires of the mind,” which is the legitimate end of all poetry, the familiar tragedy tends to *bring down* these desires to the realities of things—which is directly to defeat that end, and is the very reverse of Bacon's celebrated proposition. It is for this reason that Comedy ranks so much below Tragedy—its representations are too familiar to produce any lasting impression. The tragedy of middling life comprises much powerful dramatic talent; and admits, no doubt, of many striking and affecting situations; but it rejects the embellishments of poetry and the nobler

passions, and is so far essentially inferior to the more dignified Tragedy. There are many scenes in George Barnwell well conceived and executed, but the only effect which both the perusal and representation of it ever had with us, was to produce a strong sensation of disgust. It is perhaps upon the same principle, that we may account for the want of interest in the Sentimental Comedy; and for the mirth rather than the melancholy, which its Poor Gentlemen, its Lieutenant Worthingtons and others, "full of their Canada crotchets," who "disdain all solicitations," and yet are continually incurring obligations, are calculated to inspire. There is always something of the ridiculous—than which nothing can be more destructive of poetic effect—thrown around such personages, by the comments in which the rest of the *Personæ Dramatis* usually indulge. So that these unfortunate persons seem brought upon the stage merely for the amusement of the audience; to whom they might very appropriately address the question of Lieutenant Worthington to Frederick, "I cannot think you came here to insult me?" With regard to those representations of poetry which border upon the horrible and disgusting, they fail entirely of the intended effect. Dr. Wharton, in his Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope, has given us a literal prose translation from Dante which affords a striking illustration of our remark. The poet represents a whole family perishing of hunger in a dungeon! It is a strong conception, characteristic of "the Bard of hell," and forcibly delineated—but we turn with loathing from the picture—why? because it is full of that offensive minuteness of detail which, while it constitutes the great merit of the composition, presents to the fancy images of human suffering too immediately reflected from the life. Who that listened to Burke's celebrated speech upon the impeachment of Warren Hastings in the House of Commons, but must have felt his blood run cold, and his heart sicken at the horrible fidelity of detail, with which the transcendent genius of the indignant Orator depicted the enormities of a Monster who, with a fastidiousness not unfrequently allied to crime, had refined upon human cruelty to a degree almost inconceivable to thought. It was a fine effort of genius, but a disgusting picture—and this for the reason we have just assigned. The celebrated passage from Dante to which we have alluded, is, undoubtedly the original of Lord Byron's beautiful and pathetic Tale of the Prisoner of Chillon. But let any one attend to the exquisite and affecting narrative of the English Poet, and he will find that it is totally divested of those disgusting traits which mark its Italian Prototype.

MONODY,

ON THE DEATH OF LORD BYRON.

There is a tear that flows for all who die,
 The humblest claim the tribute of a sigh ;
 None fall unhonoured, though unknown to fame,
 Affection loves, affliction mourns each name.
 For still some tie of nature binds the heart,
 And nought can rend it like the words—we part !
 That bitter doom which all who live must bear,
 Sheds over life the darkness of despair ;
 Bids fond affection mourn the hope it nurst,
 And o'er its blighted feelings spend itself and burst.
 Th' untutor'd peasant, bondman to the soil
 On which he treads, who knows no life but toil,
 Still leaves some void in some aching breast,
 Some sigh of sorrow when he sinks to rest.
 Such is the common tributary woe,
 Which all who live to all who die must owe.

But there's a softer and a tenderer tie,
 A fonder love, a deeper sympathy,
 That links the heart to the immortal Mind,
 The all of life that lingers still behind,
 When death and dampness have usurped the light,
 And laid the form in darkness and in blight.
 And His was of the brightest ! such as ne'er
 Shall shine again through many a rolling year.
 The moon goes down—the sun and stars decline,
 But rise again—and set—and rise to shine :—
 But scarce in twice a thousand years is given
 To flash o'er earth the meteor light of heaven.
 The awful splendours of that bursting Sun,
 Blaze, dazzle, and explode—and all is done.
 Such is the dying glory, such the gloom,
 That marks thy course, Oh Genius ! to the tomb.
 A few brief years of fickle fame blown o'er,
 The hero sinks—the bard is heard no more ;
 The wretched bauble of a doubtful name,
 The only legacy bequeathed to fame ;

That loves to lie when virtue is its theme,
 The madman's phrenzy, or the poet's dream—
 But utters stern inhuman truths to try
 How much of venom links with Calumny;
 How the dull fool, the envious, and the vain,
 Will darken truth, and lie from lust of gain;
 Slur o'er the virtues which they cannot shake,
 Pervert, conceal, and damn for falsehood's sake;
 Yes, damn—as far as Dulness can defame,
 That never praises where it cannot blame.

Witness the Coward, whose ignoble aim
 Struck at the early promise of his fame;
 Who left a base and prostituted page,
 The most unblushing libel on the age!
 Whose meaner spirit and plebeian blood,
 Instinctive shrink from all that's great or good.
 Too dull for feeling, callous e'en to shame,
 Inheritor of infamy by name!
 Too vile for just rebuke, at once too vain,
 The worst of critics and perhaps of men.
 To live despised, to die without a tear,
 The meet reward of all his actions here.
 Perhaps hereafter doomed himself to feel
 The gentle castigations of that wheel,
 His pious spirit and meek love of truth,
 Bade him prepare for genius and for youth.
 But be his last and deadliest thought to know,
 His was the first and the unkindest blow,
 That ere the Eaglet chipped his early shell,
 Aimed at his heart, and aiming struck too well!
 The noble bird, though wounded, plumed again
 His mighty wing, and soared aloof from men.
 And though the venom but impelled his flight
 To higher efforts and a nobler height,
 The shaft withdrawn, the poison rankled still,
 And never ceased to pain—but could not kill.
 Bear witness Thou—but why revert to thee,
 Why tell again thy guilt's dark history,
 Or wake anew the pangs that must perforce
 Feed on thy heart as vultures on a corse?
 If thou hast aught of human feeling left,
 Think of the widowed heart thou hast bereft;
 Think of the ties thy perfidy hath broke,
 Think of the love that withered at the stroke,

The deadly stroke thy malice coldly dealt,
 And thou wilt feel—if thou hast ever felt—
 Feel—till thy heart in its own flames consume,
 Nor even find a refuge in the tomb !
 But like the victim round lost Eblis' throne,
 Condemned to tortures endless and alone,
 Thy life an immortality of pain,
 A heart that never can know peace again.
 Or if at length permitted to expire,
 Die like the Scorpion in the 'midst of fire !
 But shouldst thou live, and haply live to trace
 The Father's image in that Infant's face,
 As yet unconscious of the bitter woe
 Which springs from loss of those we loved below,
 How will it wrap thy guilty heart in flame,
 To hear that Infant lisp that father's name !
 But she, at least, to nature's dictates true,
 Will spurn the wretch who tore the links in two,
 That left her lonely ere her morn had fled,
 To mourn, and early orphan ! o'er the dead.

But it is past—his injured Spirit ne'er
 Shall sigh again o'er all that wounded here.
 And has that awful spirit passed away,
 And ceased to animate its haughty clay ?
 The minstrel's hand is cold—the lyre unstrung,
 And hushed the numbers of the prophet's tongue.
 That voice that erst in Albion's Isle arose,
 Dark Isle ! the source of those domestic woes,
 That like a cloud o'erhung his morning ray,
 And veiled the promise of a better day,
 That voice attuned to themes of love and woe,
 With a deep skill each deeper chord to know ;
 That pierced the depths of human life to find
 Subjects congenial with his mighty mind ;
 That o'er the lyre with prophetic burst,
 Poured the deep sorrows that his heart had nursed ;
 That voice that woke the Childe's immortal strain,
 Of wars, and woes, and wilds beyond the main ;
 That sung with touching eloquence imbued,
 The Chieftain's glory, and the Clansman's feud—
 The wreck of love—the loss of peace—the woe
 Confiding hearts are doomed to feel below—
 Such hearts as burst upon the sea-beat shore,
 Where sad Medora sunk to rise no more ;

Such hearts as burned in Parasina's breast,
 Who where she should not love, yet loved the best,
 With a deep feeling virtue dares not know,
 But with a fondness seldom felt below—
 Such hearts as broke when Love that cheered in vain,
 Saw Hope with Lara sink upon the plain,
 Revealed the truth its fondness sought to hide,
 And in a burst of phrenzy spent itself—and died !
 But deeper—darker—deadlier still—the heart
 Which drove stern Manfred from man's guilty mart,
 To roam the desert's genial solitude,
 Where no rude cares or harsher griefs intrude.
 Sick of the busy bitterness of life,
 Whose latest scenes are not exempt from strife,
 His wounded spirit sought the home of storms,
 Held dark communion with the mountain's forms,
 Drank deep instruction through the heart and eye,
 And found " 'tis not so difficult to die."*

The voice is hushed those scenes that chaunted o'er ;
 The minstrel sleeps, on earth to wake no more !
 The Muse laments her favourite's early end,
 And o'er his tomb is sorrowing seen to bend ;
 While with pale cheek and trembling hand she weaves
 Her latest wreath for him o'er whom she grieves.
 In her dark eye the tear grows gathering fast,
 As o'er his cold remains she looks her last.
 When at the shrine another Form appears,
 And blends her sorrows with the Muse's tears.
 Though veiled in gloom, the glories of her eye,
 And martial front, proclaimed her Liberty !
 From Helle's stream she traced her mournful way,
 In Hellas' name her tribute here to pay.
 The silent Goddess stalked around the dead,
 Closed her sad eye, and drooped her heavy head—
 Then bared her temples to the western breeze,
 And sought a refuge o'er Atlantic seas.
 The Lyre is broke—the Muse's heart is riven—
 And with her favourite Minstrel fled to heaven !

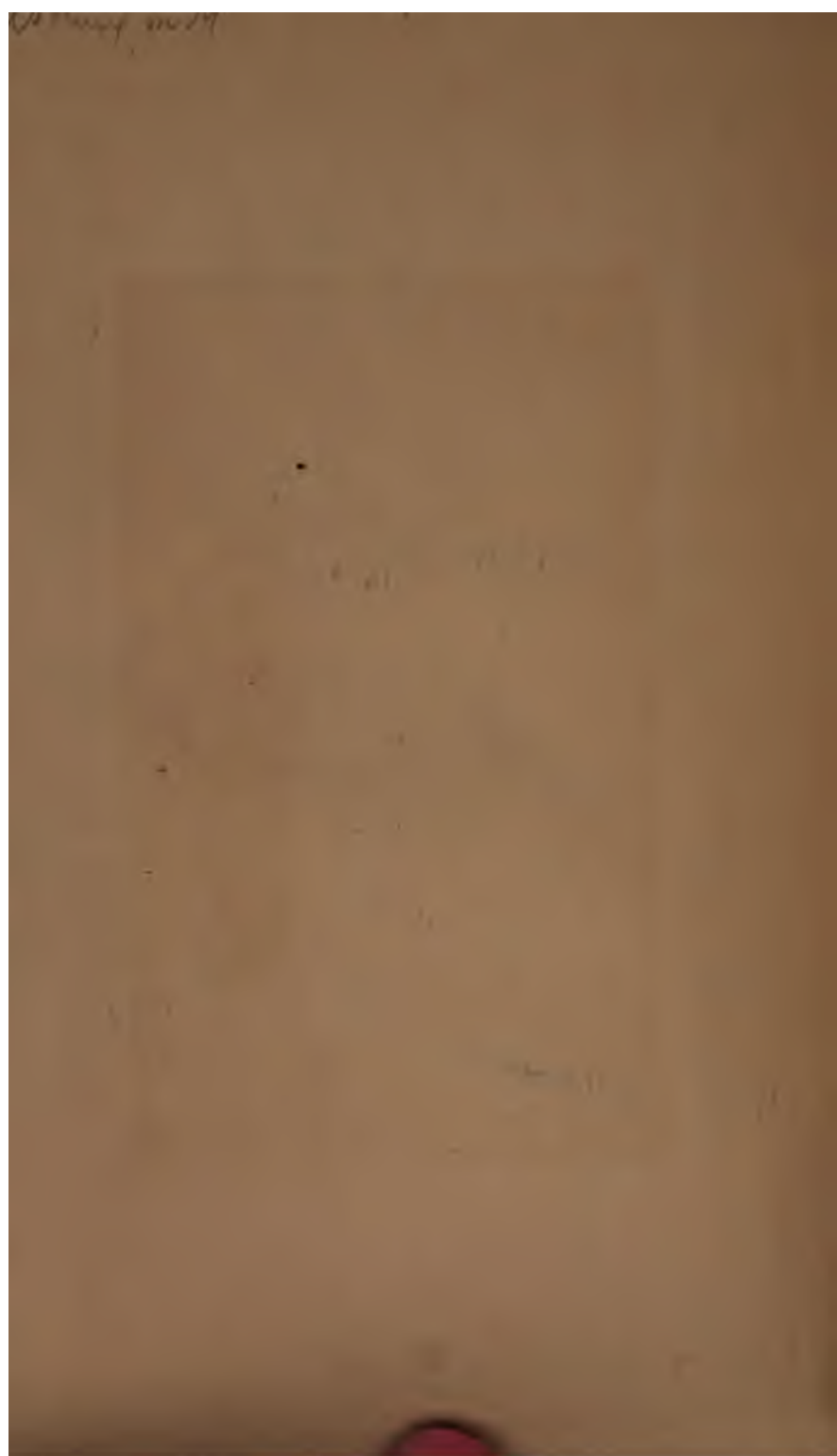
* " Old man, 'tis not difficult to die."—*Manfred*.

THE END.

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